

# **The bloody banquet**

and

# **Bewitched by them to death**

Adaptations of 17th century  
tragedies

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*The bloody banquet*: adapted from  
"The bloody banquet" (1600) by  
Thomas Middleton, Thomas Drue,  
and Thomas Dekker

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## **The bloody banquet**

Dramatic characters (22)

Armatrites, king of Cilicia  
 Tethis, queen of Cilicia  
 Zenarchus, son of Armatrites  
 Amphridote, daughter of Armatrites  
 Mazeres, counsellor of Armatrites  
 Roxano, pandar in Cilicia  
 Tilda, servant of Tethis  
 Speranza, former king of Lydia  
 Aasta, former queen of Lydia  
 Tymethes, son of Speranza  
 Lapius, nephew of Speranza  
 Fidelio, courtier in Lycia  
 Sertorio, courtier in Lycia, then in  
 Cilicia  
 Ludovico, courtier in Lycia, then in  
 Cilicia  
 A farmer in Lycia  
 Kilroy, son of the farmer  
 A captain in Lycia  
 A soldier in Lycia  
 Bells, fool  
 Cap, friend of Bells  
  
 Soldiers, attendants, and two babes  
 in arms

Time: 17th century

Place: Mythical countries in the near  
East

Act 1. Scene 1. The king's palace in  
Lycia

Enter Armatrites, Zenarchus,  
Mazeres, Speranza, Tymethes,  
Fidelio, Sertorio, Ludovico, and  
attendants; Mazeres takes off  
Speranza's crown and puts it on  
Armatrites' head; Speranza and  
Tymethes stand amazed

*Armatrites.* Speranza!

*Attendants.* May Armatrites, Lydia's  
true-born king,  
Live long to slay the rage of all his  
foes!

*Speranza.* Do we not reign?- Ah, who  
plucks out our brows?

*Armatrites.* Are you amazed, old  
king? Yon followers,  
Like children sitting on a falling  
branch,  
Seem dazed in fits of wonder. Shake  
your soul  
From high fantastic dreams of  
royalty,  
Gone with your chimney-smoke.  
Arise, arise,  
The morning's cold and cruel, be  
prepared.

*Speranza.* King of Cilicia- *Armatrites.*  
King of Lydia, too!

*Speranza.* We hold the crown of  
Lydia. *Armatrites.* Ha! Ha! Ha!

*Fidelio.* Who mocks the king?

*Armatrites.* The king, your  
conqueror,  
Can dare; a king still dares to mock  
non-kings.

Do not forget our title; we hold it,  
Earned with red coinage branded on  
our flesh.

*Speranza.* This violence does not  
breed from nobleness,  
Religion, virtue, grace, and loyalty,  
Either by heaven's or by nature's  
laws,

So most perfidiously to rise up  
Against our throne, which always  
ruled in peace,  
From which proceeds much honor  
and delight

To all our subjects, to the toilers  
bare

In their cool huts,- yes, even he who  
breaks

Our stones in heat of noon loves our  
reign well,

Because we do not war, until you  
came,

Inhuman tyrant, and laid claim to  
isles,

Ours since the father of our  
grandmother

Played at push-pin with naked  
wailing babes.

*Armatrites.* Why, doting Lycia-  
owning no such crown,

How else should we name you, poor  
king unknown?-

Can all the virtues of the world be  
kept

Inside one case of flesh? We can  
rule, too,

And well. Is it not virtue, mighty  
lords,

Sad followers of a rejected king,

To venture armies, best of our stern  
youth,

Gold, honor of our country, all we  
own

And hold most dear, for goat-farms?  
Yet these are

Our bounties. Your wounds tell you  
better than

Our tongues that courage appertains  
to us.

Conserve your land, but Lydia is now  
ours,

Our present glory and your last  
defeat.

*Speranza*. That may be, for I die on  
seeing it.

*Armatrites*. Our son, Zenarchus, now  
rules over you.

*Attendants*. O brave Zenarchus,  
ruler of the isles,

Of Lycia head, a long life for our  
prince!

*Speranza*. May he live long: I know  
no greater curse.

*Zenarchus*. Let me beseech you,  
father, to treat well

A friend, erewhile our bitter enemy.

It is a country poor we have brought  
low

With certain justice, not with  
cruelty.

Let them not feel the measure of  
your wrath

For all the sons we lost, because  
these men

Have many more of their own seen  
annulled,

Their bodies darkening in moldy  
graves.

*Armatrites*. Our anger is appeased if  
our loved son

Command it well. The boy can  
change our mood.

*Mazeres*. My liege. *Armatrites*. What,  
our Mazeres?

*Mazeres*. One word more. (standing  
aside

Remember, my good liege, you are  
possessed-

*Armatrites*. Possessed, yes, with the  
devil, it may be.

*Mazeres*. I am no Satan, since I care  
for you.

*Armatrites*. The devil cares much for  
our soul: he wants

It all entirely and so do you.

*Mazeres*. Not I! *Armatrites*. Come, no  
amazement, what's this word?

*Mazeres*. This kingdom, borne up by  
a paste-board king,

A stage-king, whom you may blow  
down with your

Least breath, though you had run a  
mile at least,

Totters beneath your sceptre. Push  
him off,

Destroy all Lycia and the isles-  
*Armatrites*. Take care.

*Mazeres*. Kiss fortune while she  
kisses you. *Armatrites*. No, no.

*Mazeres*. Compassion is laughed at  
when, kindly weak,

Men lose their house and furniture  
for her.

*Armatrites*. Thanks to Mazeres,  
duteous still to us.

Our son's the prophet of our wordly  
goods.

This country's poor. We have bled it  
with fall

Of warriors: should we bleed it  
worse with fierce,

Remorseless sanctions? Here in Lycia  
grow;

Let Lycia raise herself as well she  
can.

Our banks will back you as in  
former days.

Let enterprises thrive! Exchanges,  
bills

Of trade between two countries  
once again

Will be approved of- who doubts  
this is just?-

And let all be as once it was. See that  
Our proclamation's published everywhere.

*Mazeres.* It will be done. *Armatrites.*  
Our thanks to all. Be gone.

Exeunt all but Armatrites,  
Zenarchus, Mazeres, and Speranza

You see, Speranza, we behave to you  
Less treacherously than your nephew did,

By giving over secrets for mere grubs

Of gold. *Speranza.* Lapius!

*Armatrites.* Whom Cilicia's might  
Should now acclaim aloud, were she in love

With vicious traitors. It is plain to all  
That such lean nephews fatten on the dish

Of state and only smile to murder you.

*Speranza.* On you, Lapius, and your progeny,

Let an old man's curse fall. May he be blessed

Who cuts your limbs and feeds your sons with them,

Who bends your shrill-piped daughters to the worst

That virgins can bear.

Re-enter Fidelio

*Fidelio.* O, my liege, your queen  
Has from the palace fled with your small sons.

*Speranza.* I knew it would be so. O, my great fears!

They may be gone at large to wildest fields

Where frantic soldiers roam, both yours and ours

Of equal danger to her life, a queen  
Despairing who has lost a war.

*Armatrites.* She's found.

*Mazeres.* see that it is done.

*Mazeres.* With speed.

Exeunt Mazeres and Fidelio

*Speranza.* Of deeper sadness than the loss of realms!

She fled in her ripe hour, for had she stayed

She might have suffered stabbing from your lords,

Or banishment, or mangling of the face

By her own people, stung to madness and

Despair by losses, fire, and discontent.-

Have I some servants here?

*Armatrites.* All these, great lord.

*Speranza.* All these? Where? Where?

I find no one. *Armatrites.* Ha! Ha!

King, when we said "be gone", your slaves thought we

Were still at war and we their vanquisher.

*Speranza.* Call me, triumphant king, when they come back.

Exit Speranza

*Armatrites.* The king seems lost in fits of wonderment.

*Zenarchus.* The king has lost his kingdom. May he find

His state again in dreams.- Whose men are these?

Re-enter Ludovico and Sertorio

*Armatrites.* Mere patches from the robe of Lycia. *Ludovico.* No.

*Zenarchus.* Why? *Ludovico.* Farewell, Lycia; here's the flowing tide.

*Sertorio.* We are yours, potent rulers, not our king's,  
Unkinged by you. *Armatrites.* Give them fair treatment, son.

*Zenarchus.* Ours from this day forever. We thank you.

*Armatrites.* From us receive grace. Think of privilege,  
Place, amplitude, and any wished-for pelf.

He is not lost who ever guides himself

With the sure sun. Let others know of this.

All men who kneel to us like comets will

Take to the air again, and thus become

The wonder of men's eyes, not their base slaves.

Our bounty's like a vessel: swim to it;

Serve well our captains when you climb aboard,

And for your pains a treasure you will find,

Should you but stoop for it between your legs.

*Ludovico.* Henceforth, we are no Lycians. *Armatrites.* Well, well, go.

Exeunt Ludovico and Sertorio

We'll take them one by one.

*Zenarchus.* Not all, O king.

*Armatrites.* Ha? *Zenarchus.* Not Tymethes. *Armatrites.* The king's son?

*Zenarchus.* My friend.

*Armatrites.* Will you in Lycia govern with your friend?

*Zenarchus.* That is my earnest plea.

*Armatrites.* Accepted, son.

*Zenarchus.* Great thanks!

*Armatrites.* Mazeres! We should speak with him.

Exit Zenarchus and re-enter Mazeres

*Mazeres.* My liege, I fear you are displeased with me.

*Armatrites.* Not so, not our Mazeres.

*Mazeres.* Then I'm well.

*Armatrites.* What do you think of this Tymethes? *Mazeres.* Hum,

He's your son's friend. *Armatrites.* We know that well. *Mazeres.*

Therefore,

I fear to speak of him. *Armatrites.* Unwrap your thoughts.

*Mazeres.* In pleasure's lap that soft prince has been bred,

And therefore is not likely to harm you.

*Armatrites.* Tymethes will rule here with our loved son.

Our plans we'll whisper. *Mazeres.* Best of all my joys!

Exeunt Armatrites and Mazeres, re-enter Zenarchus and Tymethes

*Zenarchus.* None but Mazeres, that court-fly, could on

The virtues of a king blow such corruption.

I hate him well and wish he were not here.

*Tymethes.* Then where? *Zenarchus.* Not anywhere.

*Tymethes.* Then dream he died.

*Zenarchus.* Are you a happier man in dreams? *Tymethes.* I am.

*Zenarchus.* I'll make your life a dream. *Tymethes.* You can do it.

This morning as a beggar I arose,  
And see how well I shine. My  
comfort is

That I have my *Zenarchus* to my will;  
There is no other in this weary life.

*Zenarchus.* Except my sister.

*Tymethes.* That would make me  
glad,

But, to my grief, I love and she does  
not.

*Zenarchus.* She has not looked at  
you. Look up, sweet friend;

I'll make her love you. *Tymethes.* If I  
can win her,

I'll love you all the more, but that  
would be

To dig ashore and stretch the limits  
of the sea.

*Zenarchus.* It would, *Tymethes*,  
certainly it would. (kissing him

*Tymethes.* I wish she loved me with  
but half your love.

She is my soul's own mirror, mine to  
serve;

I can no more forget this love than  
change

The image in my glass. *Zenarchus.*  
Here comes this soul.

Enter *Amphridote*

*Amphridote.* Strange alteration!

*Tymethes.* Though in blood, still  
yours.

*Amphridote.* When will the king our  
father drop into

His grave, a rustic and a ruffian  
slave?

*Zenarchus.* Why are you angry?

*Amphridote.* Why? For treating ill  
My own *Tymethes*. *Zenarchus.* Kings  
but serve their land.

*Amphridote.* Here is my country.  
(caressing *Tymethes*

*Zenarchus.* Do not mind me, dear  
sister. *Tymethes.* Yet I think

A father should be loved. *Zenarchus.*  
Why? *Amphridote.* Why, indeed?

*Tymethes.* A passing thought, a  
trifle. *Amphridote.* Father? Puh.

What has he gained from these loud  
wars but fields

For sheep to graze on? He commits  
more sins

Than he possesses years to weep for  
them.

I am most heartily ashamed of him.

*Tymethes.* Now speak of me. Are  
you ashamed of me,

More like a beggar than a worthy  
prince?

*Amphridote.* A beggar earns his love  
as princes do. (kissing him

*Tymethes.* Now heaven falls on earth  
and we are here

In clouds. No evil's possible for us.

*Zenarchus.* Say that our father dies:  
you'll have his realm

As dowry. *Tymethes.* Ha? *Zenarchus.*  
Are you amazed? The crown

Of Lydia and the isles, together with  
Cilicia and her tributaries: yours,

Should you but reign with me. Let  
your lips meet

Although your fortunes seem  
uncertain-strange:

I am the man who best can serve  
your loves.

Exeunt *Zenarchus*, *Tymethes*, and  
*Amphridote*

Act 1. Scene 2. Before an old cabin  
in Lycia

Enter Aasta, pregnant, with two  
babes in arms

*Aasta.* Ho, is someone in this hovel?  
Ho, anyone?

Enter a farmer

*Farmer.* Who prates?

*Aasta.* Ah, sir, save us.

*Farmer.* From what, old woman? You  
appear to have been caught already.

*Aasta.* Pursued by I do not know how  
many men at arms.

*Farmer.* I will not have you stand on  
my property.

*Aasta.* Your property, uncouth  
peasant!

*Farmer.* Warm yourself inside  
bushes, not in my house.

*Aasta.* If only I could stretch you as I  
once did the bravest in the court,  
weeping in pain and with lips  
smeared in their blood kissing my  
hand and kneeling at my will!

*Farmer.* Do not anger me, that's all.

*Aasta.* If an old woman be a hateful  
sight to you, what of these babes in  
arms?

*Farmer.* I'll show you what I think of  
them.- Here, Kilroy, come. Here,  
boy.

Enter Kilroy on his knees, barking

Attend, Kilroy, and bite the  
intruder's legs should she refuse to  
run to the fields at my least  
command.

*Aasta.* Are you mad? Who is this?

*Farmer.* My son. Last week, my  
watchdog died and so Kilroy takes  
his place. Stay, Kilroy; sit- no, do not  
growl yet- softly, softly; she'll soon  
be gone.

*Aasta.* If I return with power, you'll  
feel your unkindness, man.

*Farmer.* Do, and let Kilroy answer.

Exit Aasta

Follow me, boy; here's your reward;  
gnaw well your mother's bones.

Exeunt the farmer and Kilroy

Act 1. Scene 3. A field in Lycia

Enter Lapius and a captain

*Lapius.* Someone stirs behind those  
bushes.

*Captain.* Ferrets eating.

*Lapius.* Who is there? Stay!

*Captain.* No answer.

*Lapius.* Our swords and words  
strike shadows.

*Captain.* Having fed today on what  
would fail to glut a sparrow, I'll  
readily hunt for fleshless bones or  
any piece of meat disdained by dogs.

*Lapius.* I'll uncover this mystery, or  
else never bear arms again.

*Captain.* Push away the weeds.

(A soldier is revealed, with his  
breeches down, on top of the fallen  
Aasta

Ha! I know this man as part of my  
squadron. I trained him to kill men,  
not to breed them.



*Soldier.* Help me, sir; stop her mouth. Soldiers must have sport, because they risk their blood for all.

*Captain.* Here's help, here's sport. (beating him)

*Lapirus.* Hold off a little, lest you kill him before I do.

*Captain.* What's this? Did she fall asleep while you were raping her? Is this a soldier's ardor? Is this your courage, man? I'm ashamed of you.

*Soldier.* No, look: she stirs.

*Aasta.* My babes, my babes!

*Lapirus.* Where are they?

*Aasta.* Here, run through with a pike, like rabbits on a spit.

*Captain.* More enormities? Are you to blame for this, too?

*Soldier.* They cried too loudly, sir.

*Lapirus.* Bury them.

*Captain.* Do it, knave.

*Soldier.* She'll not let go of them.

*Aasta.* My babies, my babies!

*Lapirus.* She faints again.

*Aasta.* No, I stand.

*Lapirus.* I'll help you rise.

*Aasta.* I give you thanks, a beggar's only gift.

*Lapirus.* You cannot give me more than what I stand

Most in need of: thanks and some prayers. *Aasta.* So,

I'll pay you back for kindness with its kind.

*Lapirus.* What is your name? *Aasta.* I was of Lydia once,

As happy then as now unfortunate  
And miserable, loved by few but feared

By all, till one Lapirus- *Lapirus.* O, no, no!

*Aasta.* Lapirus! He it was who killed my babes.

*Lapirus.* No, no, no, no. *Aasta.* Extinguished dearest light  
And plunged the kingdom to confusion.

*Soldier.* I knew he was a villain.

*Captain.* So are we.

*Aasta.* To heaven, nothing, my two nothings go.

Why do you seek to cheer a thing of dust?

Can Lycia breed good men? What is your name?

*Lapirus.* My name is hateful to you.

*Aasta.* I loathe none

Except Lapirus. I am not alive

Until I kill him. *Lapirus.* Hold, unless I err,

You are the queen. *Soldier.* Now I'm in it. A queen!

My luck! Where was her crown, her robe, her ball?

They will invent new tortures for my own

If ever I am caught.

(Attempting to escape, he is caught by the captain)

*Captain.* I'll hold the rope,

The brand, the dagger, anything at all,

Provided I see blood imbrue your shoes.

*Soldier.* O, misery of wars! *Aasta.* What is your name?

*Lapirus.* Lapirus. *Aasta.* Ha? *Lapirus.* Lapirus is my name.

*Aasta.* My husband's faithless nephew? *Lapirus.* On his knees

To beg your pardon for his crimes of state.

*Aasta.* Are you what I hate most except my life?

*Lapirus.* Lapirus, now your servant  
or your slave.

*Aasta.* How often in my dreams have  
I leapt up

In joy to find you dead! Your  
villainies

Should be at once requited. Our  
land's fall

And sterilization, a husband's grief,  
The king our husband's grief, our  
nobles' pains-

They'll eat this year, you know, as  
peasants did,

Our peasants will but eat as paupers  
did,

And paupers will be eaten- all these  
hurts

Derive from you, their first source  
and the spring

Of all our tears.- My babes already  
stink.

O that my soul could be a worm on  
them

And disappear in puddles and in  
dirt!

I'll tell you how such sorrows must  
be paid:

In penitence, regret, and absolution.

O happy vengeance that in pardon  
ends!

*Lapirus.* My lowly penance is by  
mercy's hands

Uplifted, and rejoices. I'll serve you  
Till death shakes me. *Aasta.* A better  
world with peace.

*Captain.* Come, sir; I doubt that you  
will pardon find.

*Soldier.* A man's faults seem far  
greater in the poor.

Exeunt *Aasta*, *Lapirus*, and the  
captain, holding the soldier bound

Act 2. Scene 1. The king's palace in  
Cilicia

Enter *Zenarchus* and *Tymethes*

*Zenarchus.* Apollo rises; drive away  
your clouds.

Come, must you always play the  
woeful man

Because no woman warms your bed  
at night?

*Tymethes.* When left alone, I wake in  
hearses, once

A prince, now meekest subject of  
the state.

*Zenarchus.* You know my sister loves  
you constantly.

*Tymethes.* There is no moon, no  
beauty in the world

Without her love. *Zenarchus.* I know  
another prize

That may please you. *Tymethes.* You  
always find some means

To keep me close to you. *Zenarchus.*  
My pretty friend,

That's my objective, for I love you  
well.

*Tymethes.* Who is the woman now?

*Zenarchus.* My mother.

*Tymethes.* Ha?

*Zenarchus.* You have not seen her  
yet, I think. *Tymethes.* Not I.

*Zenarchus.* Maintain your judgment  
of fair women fresh.

I'll visit her on purpose for your  
sake,

Because I love you well. *Tymethes.* I  
cannot speak

My true affection.

Enter *Roxano*

*Zenarchus.* She's a morsel fine,

Of a king's palate worthy. *Roxano.*  
My loved lord?

*Zenarchus.* How does my mother  
fare? *Roxano.* Why, very well.

*Tymethes.* That face I have once  
seen; I know I have.

*Roxano.* I may have served a lusty  
prince's will.

*Tymethes.* A worthy introduction of  
a pimp!

*Roxano.* You cannot shame my  
function with mere words.

*Zenarchus.* Roxano, tell my mother  
the prince wants

Her here. *Roxano.* Done. *Zenarchus.*  
Use these words to her, and speak

In a commanding tone. *Roxano.* I  
can command,

Though usually I whisper. *Tymethes.*  
That's your trade.

Exit Roxano

*Zenarchus.* A fellow of repute amid  
the court,

Almost as necessary as a king.

*Tymethes.* Small wonder: he attends  
to man's best part.

*Zenarchus.* He is a creature bred  
from jealousy,

My father's jealousy, who will not  
bear

To see the queen alone, for when  
she is-

Hold, tongue, do not disparage  
mothers. *Tymethes.* Come,

A mother is a woman. *Zenarchus.*  
That is all

And more than enough. When the  
queen looks

And pines for game, keeps watch at  
night for play,

Who would not be a pandar? Our  
king fears,

And yet the guardian of his precious  
chest,

The dragon of his treasure, is a  
pimp,

The fountainhead of frolic in the  
court.

*Tymethes.* Can envy be of use to  
man betrayed?

*Zenarchus.* Each thought a sigh. The  
king eats jealousy,

Drinks jealousy, sleeps with no  
woman but

With jealousy, a bad companion, yet  
Most worried men delight to have

her by.

Roxano, through men's fears, has  
now attained

A golden pelf in court: so keepers  
still

Eat venison and their lord salted  
beef.

Enter Tethis, with a book

She comes. *Tymethes.* Ha!  
*Zenarchus.* You may well say: "Ha!"

The queen!

*Tymethes.* Honor and beauty! There  
man's wishes rise.

Amazement shoots through me.

*Zenarchus.* Tymethes, prince  
Of Lycia, and my special loving

friend.

*Tethis.* Is it he? *Zenarchus.* It is.  
*Tethis.* We wish to see more of him.

*Zenarchus.* Struck dumb! *Tethis.* A  
prince without his weapon!

*Zenarchus.* True,  
His tongue. Salute my mother with  
your lips

If not your tongue, while searching  
out lost words.

*Tethis.* Is this the brave Tymethes?

*Tymethes.* That same prince  
Who lost a kingdom but has gained a  
friend.

*Tethis.* Return now to your friend.

*Tymethes.* All hopes are lost.

*Zenarchus.* Come, man, do not  
despair. *Tymethes.* She thinks I am  
A block of frigid stone. *Zenarchus.*  
No, that's her way.-

What are you reading, mother?

*Tethis.* "Spurts of love."

A worthy book, though dangerous.

*Zenarchus.* Who is

The author? Let us recompense his  
pains.

*Tethis.* No, let him starve. Should  
any woman heed

Such counsels, she is lost forever.

*Zenarchus.* Why?

*Tethis.* He says all women of an age  
to breed

Should love as many men as  
possible.

*Zenarchus.* Is he mad?

*Tethis.* We hope so. Let him die  
unknown. The fool

Describes love with such colors, that  
we swoon

Until we fall to it at once.

*Zenarchus.* Bind him

To twenty horses, torn to pieces till  
He vomits up his soul. *Tethis.*

Enough of him.

Is there no wine? *Zenarchus.* Yes,  
here. Whom should we pledge?

Re-enter Roxano

*Tethis.* Roxano. May his goodly  
office thrive.

*Zenarchus.* Ha! Ha! Ha! Ha! Ha! Ha!

*Tymethes.* O, pardon me.

Exit Tymethes

*Tethis.* Come, love's disease and  
breeder, work awaits.

*Zenarchus.* I'll leave you, mother, in  
the hands of one

Who without doubt can serve your  
honor best.

Exit Zenarchus

*Tethis.* I never knew the madness of  
desire

Until this instant. Struck within my  
blood!

That fellow left without a word, and  
yet

He stamped impression of such  
manliness

On me that I am sure to speak with  
him

In dreams. "Will you do it?"- "I  
pant."- "Come, come."

Out with this sapless book! All  
authors are

Lewd eunuchs, revelling with what  
they lack,

While lisping: "Do we not succinctly  
seize

The sense of sweet desires?" O,  
blank goose-quills,

You can write nothing of what we  
can feel.

*Roxano.* But I can render you what  
most you lack.

*Tethis.* O, well remembered! *Roxano.*  
I procure content,

But I need fuel in this pocket for my  
needs:

It is cold January here. *Tethis*. Here, bawd.

*Roxano*. Then chafe no more: your dish is nearly served.

Exit *Roxano* and enter *Armatrites*

*Armatrites*. Alone without your guard? Did he leave you?

*Tethis*. Forget him, husband; I sent him away.

*Armatrites*. Why? *Tethis*. Can you guess the reason?

*Armatrites*. Happiness!

*Tethis*. Your hap's a pinnacle in my waters, that

I know. *Armatrites*. In bed, when I have begged and cursed,

How often have you made me swallow hard

A rotten cherry! Will you please at last?

*Tethis*. Provided you take off rank jealousy

Together with your shirt.

*Armatrites*. No, women are Like needles pointing every way but where

They should and jealousy's your compass sure,

Attracting your sweet favors to our faith.

*Tethis*. As a reward for such words of respect,

Tonight you'll banquet in these blissful arms.

The least hair on your body will cry out:

"O, this is pleasure!" *Armatrites*. Not tonight but now.

*Tethis*. No, not now. *Armatrites*.

Now. *Tethis*. O, this is-

*Armatrites*. Now, now, sweet.

Exeunt *Armatrites* and *Tethis*, re-enter *Zenarchus* and *Roxano*

*Zenarchus*. He owns her cunt, but not her mind.

Now, pandar, hear me well. You must rehearse

A love-play with *Tymethes*: he's the man

Who now must win her love.

*Roxano*. To cuckold kings

Is trifling work to me. I can prepare Stage-properties fit to please lechers still.

No, only one should be sufficient here:

A bed, with man and woman's craving lust.

*Zenarchus*. O, listen, they are at it. Who puffs so

And whistles as he works? no doubt my dad,

Not a wide-eyed knee-bending Christian man,

But yet a sad piece of creation for

My mother, bottomless in her desires!

We may behold a king in state and say:

"He is a well-made man, kind, witty, bold,

But yet he has a wife, and thus becomes

Repulsive, hardened, brainless, kitten-weak."

He, like a polecat after meat, would jump

In air for a piece of her. In that way He may be seized and snapped at.

Commonly,

We catch men as we do mice, by the tail.

*Roxano.* You teach a scholar with the book he wrote.

I can do pleasing service for my queen;

I have done so already and I think

That is all any woman can desire.

*Zenarchus.* I hear my lord wheeze, snort, and snuffle as

He heaves away, like dying winter winds

In April. *Roxano.* We will see your lady soon.-

Mass, here she is, and sad, most horribly.

Who would not look strange after coupling with

A sickly walrus?

Re-enter Tethis

*Zenarchus.* You have received strange medicine, my dear.

*Tethis.* A medicine at which I hold my nose.

*Roxano.* A disappointed woman is a sight

That empties heaven's thunder on man's head.

What this king loses, your Tymethes gains.

*Tethis.* Now we are stiff again. Adultery

Walks on a cobweb with cast-iron shoes,

But yet, to overtop her spite, she climbs.

*Zenarchus.* None dares to sin so well as woman can.

*Tethis.* My patience's tested.

*Zenarchus.* Bitter is my tongue,

And yet the shortest way to promised sweets.

*Roxano.* Your man will fall on you like Jupiter,

But not in gold-coins, willing Danae.

*Tethis.* Or horns of bull, but flesh, man's muscled flesh.

But he must not know me. *Roxano.*

How, not know you?

*Tethis.* For otherwise we live in dread of kings

And their sharp instruments.

*Roxano.* I'm very sure

The smooth-faced gentleman will not reflect

On faces should he find expected ways

Enlarged for him. Now, worthiest queen, hear well

A pandar's sacred oath: this very night,

I'll bring you two together, put you together,

Leave you together: when you think on this,

What pandar can do more?

*Zenarchus.* Not only are

Procurers necessary, but like jars

Of pills we swallow to prevent disease-

*Tethis.* We'll finish your comparison alone.

Exeunt Tethis, Zenarchus, and Roxano

Act 2. Scene 2. A field in Lycia

Enter Cap and Bells

*Cap.* Come, fellow Bells, are the pits dug?

*Bells.* As deep as fornication's conscience.

*Cap.* Beyond all measure deep, for that must be filled up with a husband and three lovers before mass.- Is this one of them?

*Bells.* Yes, cover it with boughs. Art and an edifice of pain make a fine artifice.

*Cap.* The king will be well pleased should treason be caught in our device.

*Bells.* I swear on Cap and Bells he will.

*Cap.* What if an innocent citizen falls into it instead?

*Bells.* If the victim be a man, we'll let him go; if the victim be a woman, we'll keep her.

*Cap.* Is not a woman more dangerous than a traitor?

*Bells.* Cap, that's well thought on. If all the earth were a sheet of paper, all the seas ink, every goose-feather a pen, and every fornicator a poet, none would ever be able to write down all the harm women do.

*Cap.* A woman is more dangerous than a bull, for when we knock the beast down, it tumbles forward and dies, whereas if we press a woman down, she tumbles backward and we are asked to keep her for the rest of our life.

*Bells.* True, a traitor burns our house but a woman burns our body; a traitor burns our body but a woman burns body and soul. Before these wars, I knew a farmer who hurt his coulter almost to bluntness in service of his queen's fallow ground; when the rains came, she swallowed him whole like a pitless raisin, down without chewing in the castle's dungeon.

*Cap.* I hope I'll never be found in a woman's mouth.

*Bells.* Then you'll always remain whole.

*Cap.* Someone is coming.

*Bells.* Hide behind these bushes.

Enter Lapius, who falls into the pit

*Bells.* Caught!

*Lapius.* Help!

*Cap.* We have trapped a wolf.

*Lapius.* Help! Help! I'm no wolf.

*Bells.* If he howl like a wolf, then he must be one.

*Cap.* Fools, like logicians, learn their trade in school, I can tell.

*Bells.* If not a wolf, a traitor.

*Lapius.* Are you mad? I'm no traitor.

*Bells.* I shake my bells at your affrighted face. Neither wolf nor traitor? He lies for certain. Is he not both? Is he not Lapius?

*Lapius.* Do not mock a man of woe.

*Cap.* I lift my cap in homage to your lordship and, once certain of reward, I hope to see your honor stain the ground in that cold and filthy hole and in a worse one afterwards.

*Lapius.* I'll not lie here!

*Bells.* He lies again.- Cover him, rascal.

*Cap.* Let him feed on spiders till they feed on him.

*Bells.* I hate perfidious lords; we'll kill them all. Let us hurry to the king and bring him here, then dance and sing in jolly celebration of his prize and ours.

Exeunt Bells and Cap

Act 2. Scene 3. The king's palace in  
Cilicia

Enter Zenarchus, Tymethes, and  
Amphridote, Mazeres following  
behind

*Zenarchus.* We are observed.

*Tymethes.* Mazeres follows us.

*Amphridote.* Your only rival, prince.  
Ignore the fool.

*Tymethes.* My rival! *Amphridote.* I  
am free, I hope. *Tymethes.* I'm tame  
Provided you can kiss and kiss again.

*Amphridote.* A kiss will run quite  
through Mazeres' heart.

*Tymethes.* So? *Amphridote.* Nothing  
more or worse, lord. I'm free still.

I hate men's rules that keep a  
woman pent

In private cabinets for their sole use.  
(kissing him)

*Mazeres.* Ha! Favors from her! Every  
second's death!

I think you count the minutes with  
your lips.

*Tymethes.* He's hit where I would  
have him sorrowing.

*Mazeres.* Distraction! Will you never  
cease? When? When?

*Amphridote.* Are you impatient,  
lord? *Mazeres.* I should not be.

I lean upon a beauteous-rotten wall  
And tumble headlong if I view afar.

What monstrous hideousness in  
nature to

Make these the object and end of  
men's love!

*Tymethes.* Mazeres frets. *Zenarchus.*  
Do not scoff at a beast.

*Mazeres.* I once unskinned a tiger  
still alive

For fanging my dog: think what can  
be done

To love unwise. A king may see and  
frown.

Exit Mazeres

*Tymethes.* He leaves us with a  
thunderous brow, ha!

Let him beget an earthquake if he  
can;

I can stand very stiff. *Amphridote.* I  
know you can.

Enter Roxano

*Roxano.* Will it please my good lord  
to walk this way?

*Tymethes.* May burning pestilences  
spurn you off!

*Roxano.* I can wait patiently.

*Zenarchus.* I think you should  
Give ear to him, my friend.

*Tymethes.* What's your wish, slave?

*Roxano.* I am no slave, my lord.

*Tymethes.* Why, pandar, then.

*Roxano.* That's better. I would have  
you understand

The man I am. *Tymethes.* I do.

*Roxano.* I serve lords well.

*Tymethes.* I swear you do. *Roxano.*  
But some would have me doff

To them my hair together with my  
hat.

*Tymethes.* No marvel, sir: you make  
them lose their own.

*Roxano.* Now to our business. Live:  
you are desired.

*Tymethes.* By whom? *Roxano.* That  
cannot be revealed.

*Tymethes.* Not known?

*Roxano.* Hush, it must not.



*Amphridote.* I think they speak about their business long.

*Zenarchus.* Why should a princess pout and mope? Come, stare In wonder at the image in your glass: A splendid recreation for most women.

*Tymethes.* How, blindfolded to her room? Are you mad?

How will I rise as man without her face?

*Roxano.* Speak lower, or else all is lost. Hear well:

Her face must be unknown, but yet I swear

She'll open all the rest, and you, amazed,

Will call that tedious which you thought was joy.

A woman is the sweetest treasure.

*Tymethes.* True,

Her body is, but yet her soul's the dragon that

May murder me. *Amphridote.* Sir, are you done with work?

I caught a cold and lost it since you last

Attended me. *Tymethes.* What, wearied and forlorn?

*Zenarchus.* No, she has spent her time star-gazing. *Tymethes.* Yet

I'll beg forgiveness with a thousand oaths.

*Amphridote.* I'll count them all.

*Zenarchus.* Believe she will.

*Tymethes.* I do.

*Amphridote.* Are not men lovely? How are we not blessed?

They open doors of pleasure, shut out fears;

They care for all our ways and treat us well.

Are not men lovely? How are we not blessed?

Why then should we avoid to love them, too?

When sex is eased, to burn and press no more,

How then should we avoid to love them well?

Especially when they walk out the door.

*Zenarchus.* With kisses stop her mouth; win her with trust.

*Tymethes.* Win her and conquer her with thrusting, too.

Exeunt *Tymethes*, *Amphridote*, *Zenarchus*, and *Roxano*

#### Act 2. Scene 4. A field in Lycia

Enter *Speranza* and *Fidelio*

*Speranza.* The loss of my dear wife afflicts me worse

Than if I had lain buried in a pit:

Without a light or water, death in life.

(*Fidelio* falls into a pit)

Ha! What is this? *Fidelio.* I am unhurt, my liege.

*Speranza.* I see another man lie next to you,

Both you and him on bones of men forlorn.

*Fidelio.* I do not know his name, but he seems dead.

*Lapirus.* Not dead. *Speranza.* What is your name?— Speak, speak.

*Lapirus.* *Lapirus.* *Speranza.* Ha! *Fidelio*, take my hand.

As for that traitor, may he feel my boot

Hard on his languishing face till he shrinks

Away to nothingness. *Lapirus*. Hear me, great king.

*Speranza*. No king, no king at all, no king at all,

Thanks to your care, *Lapirus*, without crown.

(Filelio is pulled out)

*Lapirus*. Lift me away from this dark ghastly pit.

*Speranza*. False nephew, never.- Cover him with earth.

*Lapirus*. Will you hear me? *Speranza*. No, but I'll honor you With speeches when you are at last deceased.

*Lapirus*. I saved kind Aasta, your beloved queen.

*Speranza*. Ah, when? *Lapirus*. Take me away and I'll tell you.

*Speranza*. Remove him from his prison and his shame.

(Filelio pulls out *Lapirus*)

*Lapirus*, do you know where lies my wife?

*Lapirus*. I do; I'll tell you- but first meat and drink.

*Speranza*. He faints; revive him. If he feign reports, On beasts he will not feed, but be their food.

Exeunt *Speranza* and *Fidelio*, carrying out *Lapirus*

Act 3. Scene 1. A room next to Tethis' bedchamber in Cilicia

Enter *Zenarchus* and *Roxano*, in the dark with lanterns

*Roxano*. Here is our farthest verge, next to the queen's, Where every shadow is both dark and safe.

*Zenarchus*. Where love can enter. O, my soul is faint

With envy of this fellow's happiness.

*Roxano*. When I think of the youth's felicity,

I can chew feathers and not spit them out

Until I choke myself. This is to serve! I clasp with dairy wenches- that's the cream

Of all my pleasures- while my doting lord

In nectar bathes. This is good dealing, hah?

*Zenarchus*. A raving mother's gratified delights

May cause a father's death, and then I reign,

With my *Tymethes*' hand in mine I reign.

Enter *Mazeres*, with a lantern

*Mazeres*, like a phantom, malcontent!

What is he doing here? *Roxano*. Go, I'll find out.

Exit *Zenarchus*

*Mazeres*. *Roxano*! *Roxano*. You know me. *Mazeres*. Can I move you?

*Roxano*. How?

*Mazeres.* Is any part of me found in your blood?

*Roxano.* As far as to the heart.

*Mazeres.* I ask no more.

*Roxano.* Touch me and try my mettle. *Mazeres.* I'll do it

With my own metal. *Roxano.* Gold! *Mazeres.* And after that

Come princely advantage, eminence, And all the gifts that fortune calls her own.

*Roxano.* I'm yours. *Mazeres.* Then listen to your rising thoughts.

There's one Tymethes, Lydia's banished son-

Zenarchus gives him place inside the court-

That fellow's my disease; I cannot thrive

With him here. When I look at him and see

The favors showered on him by the prince,

My body is a prison and I pine.

My honors, dignities, and marks of grace

Are dreams beside his own. I can ease you;

Live rich and happy; you are wise; farewell.

*Roxano.* Hold, hold. Is this not wittily conceived?

Say that I stab and then get caught for it:

You did not order a man's death, not you.

To shut the princess' eye, the queen's as well,

And monstrously beloved by the fond prince?

Here's gold to bring Tymethes to his bed

Of carnal pleasures with perfumes and songs;

Here's gold to bring Tymethes to his grave:

Which gold weighs heaviest? Ha, the killing gold

Kicks him in air. *Mazeres.* I see him; ply your skill.

Exit Mazeres and enter Tymethes

*Tymethes.* Roxano, are you near?

*Roxano.* Your pleasure, too.

*Tymethes.* You'll nudge me to a warm bed, will you not?

*Roxano.* It may be warm or cool; that certainly

Depends on you. *Tymethes.* Ha! Ha! Trust me for that.

*Roxano.* I do. Now put this blindfold on. *Tymethes.* Why? Why?

Is it not dark enough? *Roxano.* You must be stuffed

Into the darkest region man can know.

*Tymethes.* I never played at blindman ere this night.

*Roxano.* Is love not blind? This is his usual game.

*Tymethes.* Why do I trust you?

*Roxano.* For a woman's eyes?

A woman's hair? Her lips? Her breasts? Her hips?

Her buttocks? Thighs? The sweet spot welcoming?

*Tymethes.* Sufficient reasons for man's candied mouth.

*Roxano.* The pleasure is much greater when we see

No sin while we commit it. *Tymethes.* To my sweets!

*Roxano.* Those who love women best are often found

Exactly where you are. *Tymethes*. I know they are.

Will you lead me to her? *Roxano*. My lantern's out,

But what of that? What we do in the dark,

We hate to see in moonlight.

*Tymethes*. Guide this hand

To my eternal pleasure. *Roxano*.

Well thought on!

From the beginning we know lovers' prize:

They always look for love and lose their eyes.

Exeunt *Roxano* and *Tymethes*

Act 3. Scene 2. Another room next to *Tethis*' bedchamber in Cilicia

Enter *Tethis* and *Tilda*

*Tethis*. Fear-fighting blood! Who can abide love's delay?

*Tilda*. Who should come?

*Tethis*. A man, *Tilda*, who else?

*Tilda*. For your pleasure?

*Tethis*. Never pronounce that word unless I feel it.

*Tilda*. Your lips do what you frown to hear from mine.

*Tethis*. It is well past midnight, yet a pillow hates a fretful queen. Tell me a story.

*Tilda*. What kind of story?

*Tethis*. Of your first love.

*Tilda*. I first fell in love with my father, very violently, but we were discovered.

*Tethis*. By your mother?

*Tilda*. Indeed, who ignominiously chased me from the house. I next fell in love with two of my brothers.

Our elopement was spoiled by my sister, who in despair raped me in a dark cellar. She was my fourth love.

*Tethis*. A servant's love-tales are necessarily tedious; we of the finer sphere acknowledge comelier ones.

*Tilda*. I do not doubt it, madam.

*Tethis*. Hear and do not blush.

*Tilda*. To blush? What's that?

*Tethis*. My first love was a horse.

*Tilda*. Brawny men please me best.

*Tethis*. I mean my courser, a father's gift. *Beauteous Pasiphae* yielded her stable to the Cretan bull. Likewise, one night, on gazing in rapture at the mighty animal, I fell inside the stall. There sat a fifteen-old girl in the shadow of a dark horse. What would you have done?

*Tilda*. I do not know, madam.

*Tethis*. Perplexity is the constant livery of low conditions. It was evident to a princess that she should tame the beast, or else lie in danger of her life. And so I did. It hurt at first, but that's usual in most cases, I think.

*Tilda*. True.

*Tethis*. Since that time, I'm peculiar about the size of it.

*Tilda*. That should not matter.

*Tethis*. To me it does, because of that steed.

*Tilda*. Great women are by fortune greatly favored.

*Tethis*. The inevitable consequence of rare courage.

*Tilda*. No doubt. Did your father discover you?

*Tethis*. No, but having found the maned lover with my sister, he gelded him. One year later, she

killed herself for love, the love of that stallion.

*Tilda.* I very much pity her.

*Tethis.* Men's voices in my chamber! Fly in haste.

With precious plates and glass attend them well.

If with a man a woman will be pleased,

Stuff that man's belly first, with plenty eased.

Exeunt Tethis and Tilda

Act 3. Scene 3. Tethis' bedchamber  
in Cilicia

Enter Roxano, leading Tymethes by the hand

*Roxano.* On my soul, day breaks.

*Tymethes.* May I take away

The vexing cloth? *Roxano.* Do, very soon you'll lose

Much more than that. *Tymethes.*

True, a few spurts of love

Which men rejoice in losing. Ha! Look here,

The walls are all afire. O, thick-sweet air

That ravishes the senses! One could melt

In it and be content, much like a fly

In amber dying or a ball of honey.

What is this hanging? Venus, all your blood

Is here. See your Adonis blush and quake,

Led by your hand; you point to the rapt boy

What he should aim at, never known before,

A place too glorious even for the gods

And man attains it. Cytherea sighs.

O, I cannot hold. So much spiciness fills

The cloudy air that I am wrapped in fear:

Too much delight makes us doubt if we dream.

*Roxano.* Your supper is prepared by airy nymphs.

Enter with soft music Tilda and other servants, naked and masked, preparing a banquet, with many bright lights, and exeunt in great pomp

*Tymethes.* I am all pleasure. *Roxano.* Relish all and die.

*Tymethes.* The water's crystal; I can see red fish

In it, the same as on my plate.- O, O, The savor will forever make me loathe

My usual meat, as if I tasted dirt

All of my life. Bright luscious fruits seem drowned

In golden frankincense and taste as if

No man has ever sinned. I am a bee:

I swim in nectar. *Roxano.* Shadows of her love.

*Tymethes.* I sicken in excess of paradise.

No more, Roxano, otherwise I faint.

*Roxano.* Is this not flavor's very tang? *Tymethes.* It is.

*Roxano.* More wine? *Tymethes.* These drops kill me.

*Roxano.* No, no, too soon,

For nether parts await their pleasure, too.

*Tymethes.* I'll never venture in my dishes more.

I'll vomit up my caviar, spit on all  
Our tastiest sauces, poisoned by  
these sweets.

Eternal pleasure at the tip of tongue!

Enter with soft music Tethis, naked  
and veiled, bearing a cake in the  
form of a shell

Your lady hides her face, but not her  
mind.

*Roxano.* She floats on clouds  
perfumed. *Tymethes.* O, such soft  
mists

Cannot but make me wish to kneel  
my way

To her and suck the air. Ah, to die  
now

Would be to die in heaven. *Roxano.*  
Mark her cake,

The harbinger to pleasure of the  
tongue

In head and the far keener one  
below.

*Tymethes.* My swollen breeches split  
at front and back.

I am the eye for revelation's  
masque,

I am the ear saluted by truth's sighs,  
I am the tongue that knows all  
honest oaths,

I am the hand that has faith's bosom  
limned,

I am the phallus queens of Egypt  
suck.

*Roxano.* You sail, sir- *Tymethes.* On  
a sea of pleasures. *Roxano.* Read  
Before your mast this note our lady  
left.

*Tymethes.* "My love and bounty will  
increase,

So long as you regard my peace.

Unless your life you would forgo,

Your silence study, do not know.

I'll close your eyes in pleasure, or in  
death."

*Roxano.* Is this not well? *Tymethes.*

*Roxano,* no more words.

Exeunt *Tymethes* and *Tethis* behind  
the curtained bed

*Roxano.* Despite impatience, one  
more strophe I'll scan

From my own well-remembered  
lines of night:

Much like a golden vessel in a storm  
Man sleeps; there's thunder, but he  
hears no doom,

With happy dreams of love by love  
betrayed.

When you seduce another's wife,  
tremble:

The wind is dangerous; so is the  
rain,

So is a sparrow chirping in the air.

Exit *Roxano*

Act 3. Scene 4. The king's palace in  
Lycia

Enter *Speranza* and *Lapirus*

*Speranza.* You do not lie? My love  
arrives today?

*Lapirus.* Have I not sworn she  
would? Then more delights

Must kneel to you as when you were  
a king.

*Speranza.* As when we were a king!  
That theme makes me

Sad, very sad, *Lapirus.* *Lapirus.* Our  
queen comes.

Enter Aasta

*Speranza.* A queen no more, except in my fond heart!

*Aasta.* And in my own none but my loving king!

Yet we must leave untasted any joy  
Of love until some notable revenge  
Falls like Gomorrha's thunder on the head

Of a base soldier, killer of our babes.

*Speranza.* No! No! Our little ones dead? No! O, no!

*Aasta.* Pricked out, and there is more to sadden you.

*Speranza.* More?

*Aasta.* One whom we never knew but yet was loved

Inside my belly withered and is lost  
With others who have lived.

*Speranza.* Find him, bind him;  
I'll play the torturer. *Lapirus.* Our captain comes.

Enter the captain with the soldier bound in chains

*Speranza.* Is this the man? *Aasta.* Love, he must be no man.

Diana's beams must never shine on him

Intact, or else you taste my bed no more.

*Speranza.* Give me a razor. *Soldier.* Oh, hear me, my king.

*Speranza.* I'll hear your limbs hiss as I sever them.

*Aasta.* There is an outrage worse than death of babes.

*Speranza.* How, worse?

*Aasta.* Your queen was raped by him.

*Speranza.* O then my god,  
Oblivion is your substance, or else how

Can you be otherwise than what you are

Meant to be in our praises? I must dig

Some new path to a man's pain: he must feel

Some never-heard-of engine press on him,

Some lingering, malignant, deadly burr

That yet attracts no death but newer shapes

Of suffering. *Soldier.* O, spare a poor man who

Has bled in your wars. *Speranza.* If you suck in breath

An instant more without some cry of pain,

The world's to me but an impossible Dream which I hate. *Aasta.* I'll stoke this fire with more.

*Speranza.* How, is there more?

*Aasta.* Spare this degenerate,  
Till you search out another man of shame.

*Captain.* I'll fetch the poor slave with his brainless son.

Exit the captain

*Speranza.* Who is he? *Aasta.* I guess he's a farmer, who,

Disdaining to uplift a queen in woe,  
Chased her from his house to rot in the fields.

His son helped him, a very beastly one.

Re-enter the captain with the farmer  
and Kilroy bound in chains

*Speranza.* Is this the man? Is that the  
boy? *Aasta.* No doubt.

*Speranza.* Go, captain, light a  
bonfire for all three.

*Captain.* Not for the child!

*Speranza.* Can leaves thrive when  
the root is blighted still?

*Farmer.* No, no, no, spare the child,  
and let me die.

*Lapirus.* Hold, uncle, none of these  
must be burnt down.

*Speranza.* Mere rotten wood. Are  
you their angel dropped

From heaven? Kick away the ladder,  
fool.

*Lapirus.* Hear me, great king- yes, I  
say king, great king,  
As you'll discover when you hear my  
news.

I have raised up new armed forces,  
fit

To overthrow Cilician tyranny.

*Speranza.* O, fortunate event! Have  
you done this,

The traitor to our cause? *Lapirus.* I  
have done this,

But yet we need more men. All three  
must be

Recruited for this war. *Speranza.* Do  
you hear, wife?

Will these be blown in smoke, or  
serve our state?

*Aasta.* Forgive them. *Speranza.*  
Luscious odor of compassion!

Obey the kind commanding Lycian  
queen.

Enter Fidelio with Bells and Cap  
bound in chains

More soldiers?

*Lapirus.* No, my liege, loons adding  
to the world's happiness when we  
watch them suffer and die.

*Speranza.* This man strangely  
resembles my fool.

*Bells.* Master, do not doubt that I'm  
indeed your foolish Bells, or your  
bellish fool, whose mettle your  
unpitying nephew seeks to melt  
inside his coffin.

*Speranza.* Why, nephew?

*Lapirus.* He left me famished in the  
hole where you rescued me.

*Speranza.* Pardon them, as we have  
done the others.

*Lapirus.* These can never be soldiers.

*Aasta.* Yet release them, for our  
sake.

*Lapirus.* Come, glorious muckheaps;  
receive from me the deeds of mercy.

*Bells.* We'll serve your soldiership.

*Cap.* Very ceremoniously.

*Lapirus.* (striking them

Taste the sauce of my new-found  
clemency. Is it too sharp?

*Speranza.* Hold, nephew!

*Aasta.* Beware of intemperate  
passions.

*Lapirus.* I'll beat them till they smell  
their blood.

*Speranza.* Fidelio, how may we beset  
at once

The vile usurper of the Lydian  
crown?

*Fidelio.* Surprise him in his castle. In  
these garbs

Of pilgrims, let us with feigned  
prayers read

To him at table. Kill him piously.

Exeunt *Speranza*, *Aasta*, *Fidelio*, the  
captain, the soldier, the farmer,



Kilroy, and Lapius, beating Bells and Cap, who cry out in pain

Act 3. Scene 5. The king's palace in Cilicia

Enter Zenarchus and Tymethes

*Tymethes.* Have you known subtleties to match this trick?

*Zenarchus.* Led to your lady blindfolded! *Tymethes.* In state.

*Zenarchus.* The servants all in vizards! *Tymethes.* By this light.

*Zenarchus.* Her room, a honeycomb of art and sweets!

*Tymethes.* Yet all that's nothing, friend, when I reflect

Upon her bed. Physiology was drunk,

For I swear, in defiance of her laws, I could ejaculate for three brief hours.

*Zenarchus.* Who is this new love-goddess of the world?

*Tymethes.* I would tear out one of my eyes if I

Could find her with the other one. Despite

Mysterious and inexplicable threats, Curiosity could not forbear to cheat.

*Zenarchus.* How? You possessed another to her face?

*Tymethes.* No, but I plucked this jewel from her broach,

By which means her name may one day be known.

*Zenarchus.* Hush, here my sister comes. Compose your face.

Enter Amphridote, with Armatrites and Mazeres hiding above

*Amphridote.* My dearest love!

*Tymethes.* My dearest, dearest love!

*Armatrites.* Three words and all three poison. *Mazeres.* I warned you.

*Armatrites.* He courts our daughter?

*Mazeres.* Others just as well.

*Armatrites.* Blowfly, defeated beggar! *Mazeres.* Worse than that,

A traitor to Cilicia. *Armatrites.* He betrays

The secrets of our state to the old king?

*Mazeres.* Robbed from your son while sleeping on his breast.

*Armatrites.* Tymethes lipping him on the same bed!

To know more is to warp. *Mazeres.* I grieve on it.

*Armatrites.* Why did her mother's dugs, instead of milk,

Not yield her viper venom and its tooth?

*Amphridote.* My lips are not forgotten by your own.

*Tymethes.* Can they forget to open while they thirst?

*Mazeres.* The lovers in dark private chambers meet.

*Armatrites.* More private is the grave, lust's only end.

*Amphridote.* Give me some proof of your supposed love.

I'll take that jewel from your hat.

*Tymethes.* This jewel? No.

*Amphridote.* No? Loving brother, fetch me here at once

My dictionary: what is this word: "no"?

*Zenarchus.* You must please her in every way you can.

*Amphridote.* That gem, or else you taste my charms no more.

*Tymethes.* Love, anything but this.  
I'll give you-*Amphridote.* That.

*Tymethes.* I'll have you happy.  
*Amphridote.* Amphridote is yours.

Exeunt Tymethes, Amphridote, and  
Zenarchus

*Armatrites.* No, daughter, you are  
mine, and that we'll see.

Exit Armatrites and enter Roxano,  
above

*Mazeres.* Tymethes bites his woman-  
wormy bait.

*Roxano.* We'll see him in our basket  
gasp and pine.

*Mazeres.* The day is pleasure's. You  
will lead him far?

*Roxano.* Tut, can I lead him farther  
than his grave?

He finds new holes: let one of them  
find him.

*Mazeres.* My rival covers our fair  
queen as well?

The mother, and the daughter, and  
the son,

All opened wide to the heroic lance  
Of this new Amadis of courtly love!  
The king must know the last of his  
success,

Quite likely apt to suck him to his  
end.

Exit Mazeres and re-enter Tymethes,  
above

*Tymethes.* Roxano, dare I soon but  
hold again-

*Roxano.* My mistress pants.

*Tymethes.* Tonight?

*Roxano.* Tonight, my lord.

*Tymethes.* I live.

*Roxano.* I like a lover who undoes  
himself with few words.

*Tymethes.* Ha! Ha! How many suitors  
only wish

To be undone exactly as I am?

*Roxano.* At least a hundred thousand  
million men.

Exeunt Tymethes and Roxano

Act 4. Scene 1. The king's palace in  
Cilicia

Enter Armatrites, pulling by the hair  
the screaming Amphridote

*Amphridote.* Ah, father, father, what  
have I done now?

*Armatrites.* Not much. Fond beauties  
grapple at my heart,

Except when knit to a damned thick-  
lipped whore,

Quite likely to be murdered by my  
hands.

*Amphridote.* Ah, ah, ah, ah, ah, ah,  
you knew me once

As an obedient daughter, your fond  
toy

And wanton puppet, to be dallied  
with,

With whom ones snuggles prettily in  
bed.

*Armatrites.* I'll tug you to a  
loathsome bed of woe.

You are a harlot: die with only that  
Fair title on your gravestone.

*Amphridote.* I'm amazed

Past wonder at a god who looks at  
this

And in an atheistic stupor sits.

*Armatrites.* I'll be your god, the god  
of punishment,

Not love. *Amphridote*. What have I done? *Armatrites*. Do you ask this Without a blush? (striking her Blush now. *Amphridote*. Oh, oh! Cuh, fuh! *Armatrites*. Spit out your fornications with lost teeth. *Amphridote*. Is it Tymethes who so maddens you? *Armatrites*. No, it is you; I hate debauched loins, Never begot you. *Amphridote*. At long last you speak More reasonably. *Armatrites*. I will strive, lewd minx, To think you never sat upon my knee. *Amphridote*. I was conceived by Venus. *Armatrites*. Your mixed seed Is from degenerated creatures formed, Filth of the body, not from head and heart. I loathe to know you. *Amphridote*. How I blush at you! *Armatrites*. You will blush worse with blood on false-fleshed face. Was there choice lacking? Did I not invite Great princes to our feasts and potentates? Did you not carry on your royal palm A pearl and, like a beetle, did you not Push it away to tread on pebbles, wood, And balls of dung? What barm did he add to Your ale that frothed out clear judgment? *Amphridote*. None, Am I not rich enough already? *Armatrites*. You?

Your chamber-woman is your sovereign And you, her rag and broomstick. *Amphridote*. I defy Your menaces. *Armatrites*. You frolic, subtle one; Take to your element: air, your estate. *Amphridote*. Will you throw me aside to famish? *Armatrites*. Die, I care no more for you. *Amphridote*. Why did- why did You lecher with my mother? *Armatrites*. Do you speak Of lechery? You? You? Do you upbraid? You are the thing itself, the nasty pit; I utterly abhor your lubrications. *Amphridote*. You stand up to my face. I wish that you Had never risen to man's work, that you Were to a straightness palsied. *Armatrites*. You could teach The fifty-year-old strumpet who sucked up Her lust together with her mother's milk New tricks. *Amphridote*. I'm glad to find my king subdued. *Armatrites*. Where but inside a grave will you be chaste? *Amphridote*. I am a woman, am I not? I have Desires, have I not? *Armatrites*. What you have a cat Or monkey in their heat would loathe to keep. *Amphridote*. I have the lusts most have; I can but wish You never had any. *Armatrites*. That's my wish, too.

*Amphridote.* Detested father! My cheeks scald to think

I ever was a part of you. *Armatrites.* You did not come

From our blood-line, but from some fouller place.

*Amphridote.* My mother is a whore.

*Armatrites.* What did you say?

*Amphridote.* There is no particle of you in me.

*Armatrites.* No? On your flesh you'll feel a part of me,

And creatures of the grave will suck it dry.

*Amphridote.* Fat loathsome toad that cannot think or feel!

*Armatrites.* Cesspool of concupiscence! *Amphridote.* Nasty book

Of laws and strictures! I could tear at you

Till my nails split though you were ten months dead.

*Armatrites.* Is this a daughter? No, some matter vile

Escaped from me in my worst hour.

*Amphridote.* Ya, ya!

Strike in sleep your hard horns on the bed-post

And stay there fixed. To play the modest girl

Who whimpers while the antic teacher raves?

*Armatrites.* Is your mount shaved?

So lusty gallants may

Slide off more easily while you take more.

Your chamber-door has seen more men than flies

This summer; you have taken up more men

At arms than those who drowned in Pharaoh's host.

*Amphridote.* Pah, pah! Here, by this hateful light, I scorn

And utterly reject your moral laws, Laugh at your counsels, and will run away

To beg my bread on stones, but not call you

A father ever more. *Armatrites.* For I am not.

*Amphridote.* You have said it.

*Armatrites.* I am, I am, unless-

*Amphridote.* Yes, yes, my mother-

*Armatrites.* Is the thing you are.-

No, no! *Amphridote.* Yes, yes, my mother! *Armatrites.* She is not.

*Amphridote.* No? Any fruit derives from one lone seed.

*Armatrites.* (taking out a knife Abomination's root I'll cut away.

*Amphridote.* (taking out her own If I be touched, a king will bleed afresh.

Mend with some missing tiles your leaking roof.

*Armatrites.* My nose bleeds, puh! My eyes are shot with flames.

Pah, pah! Pah, pah! Pah, pah! Pah, pah! Pah, pah!

I cannot breathe; I stifle certainly.

Come, peace. O, wearied! Peace.

*Amphridote.* Are your eyes clear?

Were they but muddied in some sottish dream,

Or foully stained by madness and despair?

*Armatrites.* You are my daughter should Tymethes leave.

*Amphridote.* He is forgotten; I love many more.

*Armatrites.* I know you do. But not your mother. *Amphridote.* No.

*Armatrites.* Your mother's never so.

*Amphridote.* Who can doubt it?

*Armatrites.* Give me his jewel.

*Amphridote.* Ha? This one? Take it;  
I scorn to call it mine.- Why do you stare?

Another fit, ha? Why do you not speak?

*Armatrites.* Destroyed forever!  
Annihilated!

*Amphridote.* What now? *Armatrites.*  
Tymethes did not give you this.

*Amphridote.* You lie. *Armatrites.* He  
did not give you this. Loose sieve,  
Show me his jewel. *Amphridote.*  
Giddy? In a dream?

I have no other, sir; that's all I have.

*Armatrites.* Show me his jewel, girl;  
show me his gift.

*Amphridote.* I have no other; listen  
to some words.

*Armatrites.* You kill my heart with  
your "no other". O!

O, O, O, O, O, O, O, O, O, O!

*Amphridote.* Ho, ho, within,  
Mazeres!

Enter Mazeres

Do you see? He's a moonbeam.

*Mazeres.* What is it?

*Amphridote.* He stares and slavers.

*Mazeres.* In a blindman's fit!

*Amphridote.* The jewel he holds-

*Mazeres.* Ah, the jewel, ah!

*Amphridote.* Is like a demon's  
eyeball. *Mazeres.* Yes, yes, yes,

Leave me alone with him.

*Amphridote.* I'll gladly fly  
To the antipodes or to the moon.

Exit Amphridote

*Armatrites.* The jewel, Mazeres, the  
jewel!

*Mazeres.* What of that?

*Armatrites.* Her jewel, O, her jewel!

*Mazeres.* Are you mad?

*Armatrites.* No worse than usual: am  
I not a married man?

*Mazeres.* Can you speak in your  
senses? Are they sound?

*Armatrites.* O, we can vomit  
thunder, shake the trees

With calamitous concatenations.

Our wife, Mazeres- the queen's,  
Mazeres,

It is our wife's. Our wife has lost her  
jewel.

*Mazeres.* Is that all? *Armatrites.* All?  
We swear that's all and that

Quite grave. The world's to us a  
blind old man

Who slips he knows not how down  
to his grave.

The jewel that we gave her, which  
she swore

Never to give away, how it blinds us!  
Do you see how it scratches at our  
eyes?

*Mazeres.* I do and weep on it.

*Armatrites.* This jewel on her  
spotted flesh she'll feel:

There will it stick. *Mazeres.* My  
liege- *Armatrites.* Our wife, our wife!  
We'll burst with torment. In our  
bosom black,

There is a whirlwind that will tear  
the frame

Of our mortality. *Mazeres.* What if  
all men

Felt as you do, my liege? There  
would not be

One woman left alive. *Armatrites.*  
Blood's bitter- Puh,

Our lungs are burst to pieces, puh,  
puh, puh!

Here Ludovico! Here! Where are our men?

Enter Ludovico

*Ludovico.* My lord? *Armatrites.* Say, Ludovico, let us hear How you achieved position in the court.

*Ludovico.* Speranza, with an eye unerring for True worth, promoted after countless tasks Of charity I undertook for him My humble self. Then- *Armatrites.* He's too honest. Go.

Exit Ludovico

Sertorio!

Enter Sertorio

*Sertorio.* Here, great king. *Armatrites.* Sertorio, speak. How were you introduced into the court?

*Sertorio.* I stabbed my elder brother for my place.

*Armatrites.* He is our man. Sertorio, hear us well:

Report that we are eighty miles away.

*Sertorio.* Is that all? I had my knife out for work.

*Armatrites.* Enough; do it with craft, for otherwise

We are lost in some violence at your head.

Exit Sertorio

*Mazeres.* What do you plan to do? *Armatrites.* Surprise the queen.

*Mazeres.* I fear- *Armatrites.* No, only she has cause to quake:

The world may safely doze, but not this queen.

Exit Armatrites and re-enter Amphridote

*Amphridote.* Mazeres? *Mazeres.* Here I am. *Amphridote.* My servant? No,

My love. *Mazeres.* Am I mad, too? Can you be mine?

*Amphridote.* I am. (kissing him

*Mazeres.* My brow knocks against Sirius.

*Amphridote.* Yours. *Mazeres.* Never have I known a woman's love.

*Amphridote.* That's not worth much, Mazeres, and yet more

Than men deserve. *Mazeres.* I will do wonders, love.

*Amphridote.* How pleasing are men's oaths! Kiss me again.

*Mazeres.* I can do more.

*Amphridote.* That first of all and last. (kissing him

*Mazeres.* I float in amber and swear by- by- by-

*Amphridote.* Swear by my love and you will never fall.

*Mazeres.* Let me drop at least once, love, on your bed.

*Amphridote.* There fall, there rise, fall and arise, fall, rise,

A thousand times, a thousand million times.

Exeunt Mazeres and Amphridote

Act 4. Scene 2. Tymethes'  
bedchamber in Cilicia

Enter Tethis and Tilda

*Tethis.* Is this my lover's bed?

*Tilda.* It is.

*Tethis.* I burn, I swell, I moisten, my buttocks itch, surely some divine portent.

*Tilda.* Very likely.

*Tethis.* In this bed, Tymethes moans and frets. I can guess why the sheet is yellowish and perforated: no doubt he dreams of our delights. Three fingers wide! When I consider this badge of manhood and how mattress, pillow, and bolster must in torture soon be pressed, I barely see or stand, so scorching are the thoughts of Venus.

*Tilda.* Man's forged member may relieve you while you wait.

*Tethis.* I have my own.

*Tilda.* A dildo? no, magnificent substitute of love!

*Tethis.* I care for no French bean.

*Tilda.* Can another of this kind be obtained?

*Tethis.* Easily, from my private engineer, or rather engineer of private parts.

*Tilda.* Mine must be narrower.

*Tethis.* Were mine larger, I would lie in another latitude.

*Tilda.* Ha! Ha! Ha! Ha!

*Tethis.* Man's juiceless counterfeit should procure some solace to myself alone.- Is love's door open?

*Tilda.* As wide as yours.

Exit Tilda

(Tethis puts on a mask, turns the light down low, caresses herself, sighs, and falls asleep)

Enter Roxano, leading Tymethes, hooded

*Roxano.* Such joys, once tasted, cannot be forborne.

*Tymethes.* I swear that's true.

*Roxano.* Tymethes, you are caught.

*Tymethes.* And gladly. *Roxano.* So, I leave you to your work.

*Tymethes.* Is my hood off? *Roxano.* Yes, take my torch.

*Tymethes.* No, hold, Have you forgotten? I must never see

Her face. *Roxano.* O, yes, I had forgotten. Yet

What trifle's that! You see how love lies masked.

*Tymethes.* This is my room- no room but heaven's door.

Asleep, I swear. I'm sorely tempted now

To slide the mask away. *Roxano.* Why not, my lord?

This female modesty's a lure, no more.

*Tymethes.* Then off it goes.- O, beauteous! *Roxano.* Ha, she wakes.

Exit Roxano

*Tethis.* Have you betrayed us?

*Tymethes.* I? No, do you mean

This silly mask? *Tethis.* O, death!

*Tymethes.* What do you mean?

Are you quite angry, Thetis? *Tethis.* Not at all.

*Tymethes.* Is this my certain ruin?

*Tethis.* Not at all.

*Tymethes.* By what I hold most dear  
and best of all

The love I feel for you, I'll prove to  
be

As truthful-vigilant as any who  
Keeps secrets in the corridors of  
state.

Mistrust your soul in sleep, but not  
my word.

*Tethis.* It does not matter. *Tymethes.*  
Here's some cheer at last,

But first say: "I forgive you." *Tethis.*  
It sticks here.

*Tymethes.* Ha, are you really angry  
or in jest?

*Tethis.* A strange, distracted,  
doubting, wretched queen  
Pulled into pieces between love and  
fear!

*Tymethes.* Do you still frown?

*Tethis.* No, no.

Exit Tethis

*Tymethes.* What have I done?

Re-enter Tethis with two pistols

Spare me, O spare. *Tethis.* Did you?

*Tymethes.* Forgive me, love.

To breathe, to touch this floor, this  
cold hard floor

With colder hands and think: "This  
is the last,

The very last thing you will ever  
feel."

Say that you pardon a weak  
wayward boy,

Or else I'll die before your bullets  
strike.

*Tethis.* Discovered, we must fear  
and die; we know

Our husband and his rages.

*Tymethes.* What a thing

Falls on me now: a mist, a murky  
cloud

Quite ready to devour. To be a man  
And then worm-meat, and after less  
than that!

I weep on it. *Tethis.* Tears?

*Tymethes.* I'm not ready for

This early doom; fetch me a book,  
or two,

O, very thick ones, for I need some  
texts

To study how to die. *Tethis.* Love,  
put your face

Beneath that pillow. *Tymethes.* No,  
no! *Tethis.* Love betrayed

Once is avenged twice: the first  
because

You are a heinous traitor to your  
queen,

The other as a traitor to your king.

*Tymethes.* Then farewell, light and  
all, when prisoners

Condemn like judges their  
confederates.

(Tethis shoots him

Enter Armatrites, seizing her pistols

*Tethis.* Ha! Is this not a hidden  
thief?- No, no,

I am the robber of an honest bed.

You should receive a heartier  
welcome than

What breeds in hospitals, where  
maggots lie

On love's remorse. A too tardy  
pause!

On my sick-bed, I have in madness  
killed



My best physician: mercy; can I  
hope  
To live? I gaze in dread at your black  
brows

And find no pardon in those clouds  
but fire.

*Armatrites.* Do I disturb your  
meditations, madam?

*Tethis.* O, husband!

*Armatrites.* Tell me your name.

*Tethis.* O, it is Tethis, love.

*Armatrites.* Who are you? *Tethis.*  
Your own wife, your Tethis dear,  
Your poor, endangered, and  
affrighted wife.

*Armatrites.* Why is a wife in a man's  
room at night?-

No answer? Ask me safer questions,  
then.

*Tethis.* Who sent you here?

*Armatrites.* Mazeres, he it was  
Who found out where you stray in  
ranging ways.

*Tethis.* O, mercy! *Armatrites.* Were  
you merciful to him?

*Tethis.* I killed your enemy.

*Armatrites.* There is more art  
In women than the colors on their  
face.

My enemy still lives, still lives, still  
lives,

But let us study how a queen should  
die.

One question more: where is your  
jewel? *Tethis.* Ha?

Is it on my broach? *Armatrites.* No,  
it is not there.

*Tethis.* Then where?

*Armatrites.* Here.

You lost your jewel, that's fidelity  
And honor. That cannot be lost  
again.

*Tethis.* Where was it found?  
*Armatrites.* Give ear, astonished  
whore:

On our lascivious daughter's sweaty  
breast

I found your jewel. *Tethis.* Ha,  
Tymethes? *Armatrites.* Hers

And yours, a mother and a daughter  
linked

In what we cannot name. *Tethis.* Will  
you not hold?

*Armatrites.* Did you restrain  
yourself? Do you shake yet?

*Tethis.* I do. *Armatrites.* Religious  
strumpet, do you weep?

*Tethis.* Let me not linger. *Armatrites.*  
Court-knives swear you will.

Perhaps there is no hell: do you  
hope to

Escape with only death like any  
moth,

As any creature that has done no  
harm?

*Tethis.* Doom me to baths, throw me  
into the pot,

But spare me, spare me, spare me  
The lingering execution of your  
looks.

*Armatrites.* I see the deed, the secret  
whisperings,

The tight conveyances, the winks  
and nods,

The artful speeches, murmurs, and  
caresses,

The hour of drowsiness, the banquet  
and

The bawdy pictures on the walls:  
they stick

Into my eye like a disease. You'll  
live.

*Tethis.* No, no. *Armatrites.* I say  
you'll live, but do not thank

A pardon that is not. Begin to fear.

*Tethis.* Do not torment me with a longer life.

*Armatrites.* You will not die so long as this is meat. -

Mazeres! *Tethis.* My heart's stopped.

Enter Mazeres

*Mazeres.* My liege? *Armatrites.* Drag out

The corpse and see it butchered.

*Mazeres.* It is done.

Exeunt Mazeres, bearing out the body

*Armatrites.* You did well to kill him, for otherwise

He would have tasted by my slower hands

A thousand weary deaths. Your pistols showed

More love than his. He would thank you for it,

If dead flesh could arise to kiss your lips.

Here, take this taper, light it, kneel and weep:

You have great need of help above for what

Will follow. *Tethis.* To that vapor I will pray.

*Armatrites.* Forget yourself. You died. The same is said

Of me. This is to marry! Pah, pah, pah!

Wives bear the cherry, husbands only pits.

Re-enter Mazeres with bloody limbs

Here comes our new-found cook. Although you shriek

Till your frail body faints in a dead heap,

These hacked limbs must be your sole nutriment

For the remainder of a hated life.

You'll carve no meat more wholesome than his trunk.

You loved this lover well: drink down his tears,

Suck on blue lips, lick on cool thighs and all.

Exit Armatrites

*Tethis.* Will you not help me die, Mazeres? *Mazeres.* No,

I dare not, on my life.- Roxano, here!

Come, knave,

Come, instrument of pleasure. What, asleep?

Re-enter Roxano

Behold our work and take in your reward.

*Roxano.* Ha!

*Mazeres.* Is this not well? Here lie Tymesthes' limbs

Cut off. Our queen in rightful anger blocked

Trickling ambition, which sought as a sea

To swell and rise above his boundaries.

These limbs that highest pitch of pleasure knew

Must glut the burdened queen a second time.

*Roxano.* Unwilling tears! We did her grievous wrong.

*Mazeres.* Repentance pours a poison in our broth.

Can that be wrong which gives us so much good?

*Roxano.* Death's shadow often covers man's misdeeds.

*Mazeres.* (stabbing him I hate philosophy.

*Roxano.* Ha! (he dies

*Mazeres.* King Armatrites, come; with joy behold

Another cunning deadly traitor caught

Ensnared, to surfeit your revenge in full.

Re-enter Armatrites

*Armatrites.* What sights are these? Roxano's horror shrieks

From very open mouths; your fingers stick

Together as if grown out of one piece.

*Mazeres.* Your secret queen's smooth messenger and road

To thick adultery. *Armatrites.* O, bury him.

We are a-weary of these sudden spills.

Now to our loved son's palace must we wend,

Informing him of his fond lover's end.

Exeunt Armatrites and Mazeres, drawing the bed-curtain before Thetis and bearing out Roxano

Act 5. Scene 1. The king's palace in Lycia

Enter Zenarchus and Sertorio

*Zenarchus.* Is my Tymethes gone? My fate's perverse:

Why should my mind be docile? Summer's dead,

And so I should make winter loudly blow

Throughout the court. *Sertorio.* This is Mazeres' work.

*Zenarchus.* Lust's avid vowel, on his sheets of shame

Reclining with my sister's circumflex,

Now laughs at my despair. *Sertorio.* With dainties fed.

*Zenarchus.* Which I'll make him disgorge. I can plot, too,

And make that dizzy wall he overlooks

Crumble beneath him.

Enter Armatrites and exit Sertorio

*Armatrites.* It is cloudy here.

*Zenarchus.* There will be thunder soon. *Armatrites.* My son, is this

A world to mope and sigh in? I hear that

We are assailed and threatened at all points

By an invading army seeking blood.

*Zenarchus.* I care no more to shield us from attacks.

*Armatrites.* Your friend was but a dream, son. Granted that

No woman is worth much, yet she can bear

Our children. Who is he you mumble for?

*Zenarchus.* The one I loved, the one who loved me most.

*Armatrites.* The one you doted on was to my wife

An unclean dish, and now consumed  
in tears.

*Zenarchus.* I cannot praise you for  
that piece of work.

*Armatrites.* A tasty punishment,  
compared with what  
That trull deserves. *Zenarchus.* Two  
giglets live with you.

*Armatrites.* I know your sister.  
*Zenarchus.* Not my sister's love.

*Armatrites.* Who? *Zenarchus.* Your  
Mazeres. *Armatrites.* No!

*Zenarchus.* I can show you  
Where they touch noses, titter  
unashamed-

*Armatrites.* Do not. I'll run mad if I  
catch that slut  
Unclasp her heaving bosom to my  
face.

We'll banish him. *Zenarchus.* Ha!  
From the world, you mean?

*Armatrites.* No, murder may repulse  
her from our care.-  
Mazeres!

Enter Mazeres

*Mazeres.* My loved liege? *Armatrites.*  
Your best-loved liege  
Must banish you, Mazeres. *Mazeres.*  
Banished! Why?

*Armatrites.* You are too inward with  
our daughter's love.

*Mazeres.* What, will I never live with  
Amphridote?

*Zenarchus.* Will whining ever cease?  
My belly heaves.

*Armatrites.* Go where you wish, but  
far from our domains.

Here's gold. Be gone. *Mazeres.*  
*Zenarchus!* *Zenarchus.* I can laugh  
At any threat. *Mazeres.* No thunder  
and no rain.

Mazeres has seen heaven and can  
die.

Exit Mazeres

*Armatrites.* Call forth your sister.

*Zenarchus.* In great haste she comes.

Enter Amphridote

*Amphridote.* Is my loved lord to be  
led to his death?

*Armatrites.* No, only exiled.

*Amphridote.* Banished! May those  
lips

Drop rotten that cut off my freshest  
pine,

Who can unruly winter's gusts  
withstand.

*Zenarchus.* Content yourself with  
more of your amours.

*Amphridote.* None but Mazeres lives  
as my beloved.

*Armatrites.* Enough; no words; he's  
banished. *Zenarchus.* Very just.

*Amphridote.* I hate you to the soul.

*Zenarchus.* He killed my love,

As he did yours. *Amphridote.*

Mazeres I adore

Above them all. I'll poison all the  
world

Or kill myself in grief. *Zenarchus.*  
What silliness

Is this? My Amphridote despairing  
for

The loss of one lone man?

*Amphridote.* The world to me.

*Zenarchus.* Dissolve and drown old  
suits in your cup.-

Sertorio, wine!

Re-enter Sertorio with wine

*Amphridote.* Do you dream to see  
me cavort and sing  
While my Mazeres sails the seas  
alone?

*Armatrites.* You will not prosper  
well, my daughter. *Amphridote.* Ho,  
I do not dote on warnings and old  
saws.

*Armatrites.* To bawl for lovers, while  
we, much amazed,  
Gape at reports of fearful enterprise  
Achieved by deadliest enemies of  
state!

Let us read them in peace without  
one word

Of controversy. *Zenarchus.* Read  
about our deaths;

I care no more. *Amphridote.* Ho,  
brother, you speak well.

And so I lift my glass. *Zenarchus.* To  
your best health.

*Amphridote.* And yours.

(She throws the wine on Zenarchus'  
face

*Zenarchus.* Hah, uh! Ha! Ha!

What is this plague? My face is  
scalded. *Armatrites.* Hah?

*Zenarchus.* Atrocious pains and  
terrible! Ha! Ho!

My sister- O, I fear- has poisoned it.  
O, she has hurt me past all thought.  
My lips

Are melting on my face, my peeling  
flesh

Is like a hell the damned has never  
felt.

O, may the pest strike her rank body  
vile. (he dies

*Sertorio.* Your son is dead, my liege.

*Armatrites.* What? No, no, no.

*Sertorio.* All too true, to our grief.

*Armatrites.* You brought the wine.  
We'll kill you. *Sertorio.* Majesty,  
The wine was tampered with.

*Armatrites.* No, no, no, no.

Our son's not dead; it cannot be this  
way.

*Sertorio.* I look at you, my lady.

*Amphridote.* I'm only sorry that no  
drop is left

For my own father. *Armatrites.* Bind  
the poisoner

With bonds of Scythia and  
Promethean chains.

Let her eat dust upon our prison  
walls.

*Sertorio.* Come, subtle mistress.

*Armatrites.* O, my son! Burnt,  
charred!

Your ashes live already in the pit  
Of our dead bosom. We await the  
ebb

Of a too sluggish-tedious-heavy tide.  
What should a father do when his  
own seeds

Begin to eat each other? Sink in mud  
And hope to be washed clean away  
to sea.

We rule, but yet we cannot be alive.

Exeunt Sertorio, Amphridote, and  
Armatrites, bearing out Zenarchus

Act 5. Scene 2. The king's palace in  
Cilicia

Enter Speranza, Lapius, and Fidelio,  
disguised as pilgrims

*Fidelio.* The secret word was culled  
from tortured slaves.

*Speranza.* The castle is but slightly  
guarded? *Lapius.* Yes.

We hear of strange events here; all is  
but  
Confusion, so that we with safety  
May strike as we wish. *Fidelio*. Ha,  
who lies here?

(*Tethis* is revealed, eating the  
remains of *Tymethes*)

*Lapirus*. Foh!

*Speranza*. Ha, do you see? *Fidelio*. I  
envy much the blind

And those with nose cut off. *Lapirus*.  
O, night in day!

*Speranza*. Most of the portions have  
been eaten off.

*Lapirus*. This is the queen. *Speranza*.  
Who, *Tethis*? *Lapirus*. I fear so.

*Tethis*. Why do you speak to the  
dead? *Lapirus*. Pah, pah, pah,

Her breath is fetid. *Fidelio*. Lips  
daubed in dark blood

Down to the chin, continuing their  
meal!

*Speranza*. What horrid and inhuman  
spectacle

Has shrunk you to such uses? *Tethis*.  
Jealousy's

What makes men mad. *Speranza*. I  
dare not venture far

Into her story. *Fidelio*. *Armatrites*'  
queen!

No fury bears more venom than his  
love.

(*Tethis* vomits)

*Lapirus*. Fah! Fah! There's blood in  
that unholy stew.

*Fidelio*. Hear, *Armatrites* comes. We  
wring our arms

And stare like schoolboys fearing to  
have lost

Their lessons. Hide your heads  
beneath these cowls,  
Or surely we will die this very hour.

Enter *Armatrites* one one side and  
*Sertorio* and *Ludovico* on another,  
attired as soldiers

*Armatrites*. Our soldiers brighten at  
the break of day:

Is this the sun of morning on your  
arms,

Or is it blood from our worst  
enemies?

*Sertorio*. This is our own gore you  
see us caked in.

*Armatrites*. We will avenge it boldly  
ere we fall.

We'll plough our fields with rebel  
bodies; thus

Will they lie fruitful to our tongue  
again. -

Who are those men who stand so  
close and pray?

*Sertorio*. Some pilgrims, it appears.

*Ludovico*. I gave them way

Of passage, since they gave the  
secret word.

*Armatrites*. For whom, dear  
brethren, do you pray? *Fidelio*. For  
you,

My liege, must you not die? Must  
you not go

As we will, as we all must die at last?  
Therefore, we pray for you and all  
of yours.

*Lapirus*. Grant us a just request, and  
nobly fair.

*Speranza*. Will you not succor,  
dreaded majesty,

This human being from her  
misereries?

*Armatrites.* She's not a human being, but our wife.

*Speranza.* We grieve for her and you. *Armatrites.* Sertorio, shut Away the loathsome object from our sight.

(Sertorio draws the curtain

Let us eat, pilgrims. The day's long and hard.

*Speranza.* We thank you for this offer fair and good.

(Enter servants with loud and dissonant music; a banquet is prepared; Sertorio carries a skull to the table; all bloody

*Armatrites.* Come, sit and feed, my brethren; gorge your fill.

*Speranza.* This bounty conquers us.

*Armatrites.* That creature you Espied awhile ago was ever ours, And held sway over all our thoughts and bents,

But she slipped, losing her perfection.

Unless she spoke there was no music, when

She kissed Cilicia owned no roses, till

Her heart strayed like a planet from our view.

She said she would return- all planets do-

But we have dropped the glass that spied her out.

*Sertorio.* She's fortunate, because, in her weak state,

She'll surely find out peace before we do.

*Armatrites.* The hope of all. Her belly is become

Her dear companion's grave and final rest.

This is his skull, this is his blood; The rest of his anatomy of sin she has.

*Speranza.* What is the name of that unfortunate

Who lusted for your queen?

*Armatrites.* Hum, hum, his name?

*Ludovico.* Tymethes. *Speranza.* Ha! No.

*Armatrites.* He's the man indeed, Son to the banished king. Did you know him?

*Speranza.* O, slightly. *Armatrites.* Do you weep?

*Lapirus.* Our brother's kind.

He weeps on all who die. *Armatrites.* To our affairs.

We have thought of a mission fit to kill:

Will you not spy for us? *Fidelio.* Spies! We have no

Experience in that way. *Armatrites.* Our Lycian foes

Intend to charge us to our very seat.

All pilgrims are quite welcome everywhere,

So that by entering their houses you May easily discover their designs.

*Lapirus.* What, traitors to our country? *Armatrites.* What of that?

*Lapirus.* (stabbing him

Yes, we accept. *Armatrites.* Lapirus!

*Speranza.* Many more

Reach for your throat, foul, wretched interloper.

I'll blow your sated body to air-motes.

*Armatrites.* Our soul is lost in wrath. Ha, the old king?

This piece of cunning kills you, king.

(They fight; Armatrites gets the advantage over Speranza and is ready to kill him until stabbed from behind by Fidelio

*Fidelio*. I like fair play almost as much as tyrants.

*Armatrites*. O, had we lived till awful doomsday's crack,

We would have been quite happy but to see

A queen in bone-dust end her life of shame.

Were we a king? The ground has never yet

Erected seats for fallen majesty.

No, indiscriminate dust buries it.

Our destiny's a father, loving-poor,

Who as a gift gives us a paper boat,

Youth's gliding pleasure, but soon sopped in tears

Of woe and shrivelling without a sound.

Ha! Ha! Ha! Ha!

Now laugh away the spirit, breathe no more;

The soul is nothing, so to nothing go. (he dies

*Speranza*. The king's dead. If you love me, kill the rest.

Let no one stand in foul Cilicia's rank.

*Lapirus*. Sertorio, Ludovico! I hate traitors.

(They stab to death Sertorio and Ludovico

*Speranza*. Cold limbs of eld are warmed by work they love.

*Lapirus*. I'm scarcely heated and I beg for more.

*Speranza*. Did the fool-tyrant lack a man to kill

Except my son? Ah, death, who conquers you?

Why, nothing does. Religion is a dream,

So are our loves and hates, and death ends all.

Nothing survives; dust is the final place

For bodies and souls. Humankind can trace

The course of planets, build tall fabrics in

The air, suck at the sap in numbers, but

No worm has been affrighted or amazed

By any resurrection. There we fail.

The blinking magi followed the wrong star.

*Lapirus*. My lord, you are our king again- yes, king,

The head of Lycia and of Lydia, too.

Expunge and purge pernicious

And potent meditations. *Speranza*.

Very well,

We'll king it for a while and then go sleep.

Enter Amphridote and Tilda

Who is this flying maiden, eyes ablaze?

*Lapirus*. The daughter to this rotting kingly flesh.

*Amphridote*. We rule. *Speranza*. You speak the truth. We are the king

Of Lydia, as we were; Cilicia you

Keep for your own. Hold it; we take from here



What properly belongs to us, no more.

*Amphridote.* We reign. *Tilda.* Your lust deserves far less than that.

*Amphridote.* We banish you together with our dam.

*Tilda.* The best news we'll obtain for many months.

Exit Tilda

*Amphridote.* Where is the man who killed our father? *Fidelio.* Here.

*Amphridote.* Although the guilty deed is horrid, that

Cannot discredit beauty of the face.

We love him well. *Speranza.* We are at peace, then?

*Amphridote.* Go, go; we care for you less than a twig,

Old, old decrepitude. *Speranza.* Unhappy land,

That has a baby creature as her queen!

Exeunt Speranza and Fidelio

*Amphridote.* Have we not met before? *Lapirus.* In Plato's dream.

*Amphridote.* A manly brow appeases all desires.

*Lapirus.* You'll sup with me?

*Amphridote.* Do we have lips and tongue?

Enter the captain

*Lapirus.* Now, captain, have we news from fields of war?

Have we lost many soldiers? *Captain.* Few of note,

Except for him, Lapirus.

Enter attendants carrying the soldier impaled through the phallus

*Lapirus.* Paid in full.

The spear that with some violence pierced our queen

Has found his ravisher from front to back.

*Captain.* And a few others, sir.

Enter more attendants carrying the farmer and Kilroy

*Lapirus.* How do they fare?

*Captain.* Forgotten in their trench, they froze to death.

*Lapirus.* Thus coolly did they spurn a queen away.

Look: when we press a little, arm and leg

Snap off in two. For us they did good work.

Our country being served, we thank their pains.-

Bear out the bodies of our enemies, But leave the soldiers for our queen's delight.

Exeunt attendants bearing out the bodies of Armatrites, Sertorio, and Ludovico

Now for some mirth. Where is the fool and friend?

Enter Bells and Cap

*Amphridote.* Whose men are these?

*Lapirus.* Mine.

*Amphridote.* Why are they almost naked and bear whips indented with sharp metal points?

*Lapirus.* They lash each other every day at this hour.

*Amphridote.* Why?

*Lapirus.* Whenever we find fault with one, the other is cut to pieces. By this unquestioned justice, we laugh to find such an egregious loathing grow between the knaves that it cannot be believed. Sit and rejoice with glee in their torment.- Now, Bells- is it "Bells" they call you?

*Bells.* Yes, my lord.

*Lapirus.* (striking him I like to hear your head tinkle when I strike it. Who spoiled my sauce this morning?

*Cap.* I did.

*Bells.* You lie, I did.

*Lapirus.* Tell the truth, loathsomest imitations of men, or else your back will sorely feel what no bear or whale can suffer without yielding up their soul.

*Bells.* He did.

*Lapirus.* Expose back and legs, good fool Bells, for your friend wishes to buy from you a pair of thick red gloves.

(Cap scourges Bells

*Amphridote.* Why does the flogger cry out in pain?

*Lapirus.* Because he knows the other will be avenged on him with many more strokes than he can ever bestow.- Hold, man's best image in dung, abandon such faint scourging. I can no longer bear the tediousness of your debility. Having seen more than enough of your gory clownish visages, I have devised, because of your amity, a new tenement to keep you warm.

(Lapirus reveals a pit

Crawl into your grave.

*Cap.* O, sir-

*Bells.* Will you bury us alive?

*Lapirus.* Did you not bury me?- What, snivelling? Fatten on the same dish you served, or else behold aghast our captain unseam each member from your trunk.

*Captain.* Down, bumpkins.

I can play the tailor  
With sword and rapier.

(Bells and Cap jump down, weeping

*Lapirus.* Can you hear? By this golden morning light, I like a god swear that never more will your mouth know food, except limbs, trunk, and heart detested more bitterly than life. After that meal, retch, starve, and die.

*Bells.* One drop of pity!

*Cap.* The deeds of mercy foster many children.

*Lapirus.* Compassion grants you only this: my kitchen knife. (throwing it down

*Cap.* The plot against Lapirus was my idea, Bells.

*Bells.* You lie; it was mine.

(Bells and Cap fight

*Lapirus.* Yes, Bells, that's the way; pummel hard a famished eel and slice him thinly, as your last victual to be served.

(He closes the lid

What do you think? Is this revenge?

*Amphridote.* After knowing well a father barely in his senses with forbidden loves, a mother whose only thought was to jiggle, the lovingly impaled woman of the air, and a brother's brainless flouting of our dearest affection, we glory to find a man who knows his mind. The loonish caitiffs sought your life; now you, preventing further harm, take theirs: absolute sanity!

Enter Aasta

*Aasta.* We hear we are avenged.

*Lapirus.* And splendidly!

*Aasta.* We cannot kiss what pricks our ravisher,

Or smile to find congealed enemies.

*Lapirus.* Mine live, but with a life most would forgo.

Those notpolls who for greed's sake harmed my health

Now live inside their grave, our final end.

*Aasta.* What, buried in this pit? Release the clods.

*Lapirus.* No, never, on each other's bones they'll suck

Before we pardon them with liberty.

*Amphridote.* She teaches us the right way to do wrong.

*Aasta.* A queen commands. *Lapirus.* Too well men know those plots

Which secretly convey men's lives away.

Though I obey, my servants know my mind,

And my "do not" will sharpen sharpest knives

For recompense and praises all wish for.

Whatever we might say, the dolts are done,

In blackest ordure melting all away.

*Amphridote.* Lapirus orders only what is just.

*Lapirus.* Come, link your arm with mine. *Amphridote.* And so we will.

*Lapirus.* I'm married still and only means of life

To four sons and three daughters. What of that?

This wife's too old and must have rest; the sons

We'll send to fields of blood, the daughters to

Their masters or their fools. Love well this life.

I am a leader and great man of wars, And you no less than well-loved majesty:

We are the world's creators and its aim.

*Aasta.* Will you acquire Cilicia and the isles?

Be wedded to kind mercy and then thrive.

*Lapirus.* Though others call you cruel and unjust,

Do what is good as your own mind dictates.

*Aasta.* No, as true friends with wisdom may suggest.

If counsels you will heed and turn your mind

To age and reverence, you'll prosper well.

*Lapirus.* We'll prosper as we follow our intents.

Applaud us, friends; this budding love may be

The rose and briar of two kingdoms'  
peace.

Exeunt Lapius, Amphridote, and  
Aasta, with the captain applauding  
and attendants bearing out the  
bodies of the soldier, the farmer,  
and Kilroy

## Bewitched by them to death

Dramatic characters (13)

Violente, duke of Ravenna  
 Placida, duchess of Ravenna  
 Antonio, a nobleman  
 Isabella, wife of Antonio  
 Gaspero, friend of Antonio  
 Francesca, sister of Antonio  
 Sebastiano, rejected suitor of  
 Isabella  
 Fernando, friend of Sebastiano  
 Alzido, lover of Francesca  
 Amoretta, friend of Placida  
 Giulio, rejected suitor of Amoretta  
 Florida, adulterous love of Antonio  
 Firestone, bastard son of Florida

Servants

Time: 17th century  
 Place: Ravenna, Italy

Act 1. Scene 1. A banquet-hall in the  
 ducal palace

Enter Sebastiano, Fernando, with  
 servants preparing a banquet

*Sebastiano.* Three years expired in  
 Isabella's suit,  
 And quite undone! I feed on vows  
 foresworn.  
 A bird is said to be lean when we  
 suck  
 Its claws and beak, remains of love  
 once whole.  
 The more I eat, the thinner I  
 become.  
 A foot-clogged troop of twenty  
 wearied slaves

Who sweat with labor, on ten tables  
 worn  
 And groaning, place lambs, bulls,  
 huge plates of cheese,  
 Even his father's horses: for all these  
 Starved Erisichton shrinks. He  
 gorges, swills,  
 But yet like meatless famine he  
 appears,  
 Flat bagpipe where a belly should  
 have been,  
 Paunch without food with famished  
 mouth crammed full,  
 On passing breezes grinding emptily,  
 Until he finally devours himself.  
 I wait, and senselessly, and yet I  
 wait.  
 Where does a woman learn to feign  
 so well?  
 Inside her mother's womb? Is that  
 the place  
 Where lids are taught to flutter  
 modestly?  
 To look at man with smiles and  
 nods, a mask  
 Of deep contentment, when in  
 passion's gusts,  
 Behind her back, while still he gapes  
 at her,  
 Her hands already clasp a neighbor's  
 hands!  
 They smear away their oaths as  
 easily  
 As their own faces at the end of day.  
*Fernando.* A woman is allowed to  
 change her mind.  
*Sebastiano.* A pestilence on changes  
 and on them!  
 With what pleased triumphs for her  
 beauty's sake  
 She strips a strong man's weapons  
 from his hand,

Who, like a hollow drum, stares at the moon!

I feasted on her charms in bed: should I

Still bite my hands ashore, now that I know

What argosies of spices lie at sea?

Because she has forgotten my gaunt frame,

I do not know myself as Sebastiano;

I am another: one more staff set down,

Rejected by the placid traveller.

*Fernando.* In silence marry patience, best of wives.

*Sebastiano.* She is my wife.

*Fernando.* She is not, my good friend,

Or ever was, though promised many times

To you by her own father. Here we find

She is another's, knotted and confirmed.

Accept it or else go. Your passions sink

In bogs of melancholy and distaste,

Unknown to any man, and festering.

*Sebastiano.* Though horrid, we best love the ills we know.

She is my wife, I say. *Fernando.* How, are you mad?

*Sebastiano.* Too timid and too tame to suffer thus,

To fume and fret and lear without revenge.

*Fernando.* What rages will you follow now? Revenge

For what? Antonio is beloved by her And by her father. Why need we say more?

*Sebastiano.* I'm thrown in whirlwinds of despair and spite.

I will not sleep for seven years at least,

A world of business that can profit none.

No star can show what I intend to do,

For my mind's secretive to eye of lynx.

*Fernando.* That grief is deadly which heeds no advice.

Enter Gaspero

*Gaspero.* Do I behold a needless constant knight?

Then this will prove to be like feasts of old.

*Sebastiano.* Ho, Gaspero! You did not back my suit.

*Gaspero.* Why should I have? Antonio is the man,

A better man than you. *Fernando.* Take care, take care.

*Gaspero.* I'm glad you are invited, happier still

To find old wasting love-sighs drowned at last

In wines of celebration and delight.

*Sebastiano.* No, love-sighs drink all my life-blood away.

No man but he who suffers this can know

His unbelieved tormenting rack of pain.

*Gaspero.* Still moping? Here's a ducal feast prepared,

But not to sit and hear a wedding song

Of woe. Antonio is the fowler who has caught

Your frisky robin. *Sebastiano.* All the likelier

To lie red-breasted ere he beds with her.

*Gaspero.* What, threats, sour looks, here, on my friend's best day?

*Fernando.* Be calmer, Sebastiano.

*Sebastiano.* (drawing his sword That he'll be.

*Gaspero.* (drawing his

Come, kiss the nurse who to their final bed

Can lull loud menaces to sleep and rest.

*Fernando.* (knocking down their swords

Are you both mad? The duke will kill us all.

*Gaspero.* He swims in overflowing cups and knows

No difference between a man and beasts.

*Sebastiano.* I'll stick to water like a water rat,

Until I quite infest his house of joy.

Enter Florida, weeping

*Fernando.* What now? more follies still? complaints and noise?

Tears at a wedding and with sorrowing?

*Florida.* Sir, you would weep as loudly as I do,

Were you a whore who on this day of doom

Has lost forever her best chance of love.

*Gaspero.* No, Florida, you grieve too soon, I think.

A man may marry and yet keep his trull.

Can one bare woman ever serve one man?

Not I. As long as I stay fit, I love

One for her text, another for her song.

*Florida.* O, I could beat the vicar, scratch the bride,

In grief shoot my Antonio through the heart.

*Fernando.* He marries for his reputation. Come.

*Florida.* I know he does. But who will marry me?

The whole world knows I am his secret whore.

*Gaspero.* Withdraw into his glass-house, where he has

For many years been steadfast in his love:

There may you hope to draw out and to suck

The syrup of his well-conserved needs,

When his own wife may be unwilling to.

*Florida.* Why, these kind words somewhat cheer up a slut,

Who has seen better days and numerous.

Enter Giulio and Amoretta

*Giulio.* Is this no happy day for kissing, girl?

*Amoretta.* We kiss men's mouths that breathe with courtesy.

*Giulio.* Have I not whispered love to you with words

That sleepy poets have but dreamt they wrote?

*Amoretta.* Your protestations of deep love and truth

Are garlic that have lain in cellars long.

*Giulio.* May Amsterdam still swallow Puritans

And may Geneva vomit them in hell.

Enter Violente, Placida, Antonio, Isabella, and Francesca

*Violente.* Is our loud banquet drowned in joy? Not yet.

*Placida.* O, husband, we have swilled on stoops of wine

As readily as toads on summer flies.

*Violente.* Our holy Bacchus has begun to strut

In jubilation on our daughter's day.

Behold a bride's face, radiant, and her man's,

A little less at worst. Thus, all is well.

A wedding is a woman's day, hers, hers;

The bridegroom is the necessary post

On which she leans, an adjunct to the feast.

Out with wise sayings, barren modesties,

Which make us sad when we should whoop and leap!

*Sebastiano.* O, I can howl and jump up. Watch me, duke.

(Sebastiano howls and leaps

*Fernando.* Will you completely cast shame on all?

I can no longer know you as a friend.

*Sebastiano.* Thus may a suitor, sad, ridiculous,

Some homage render to his rival's gain.

*Antonio.* Who brought this zany here? *Gaspero.* He brings himself,

Or he has lost himself in his own self.

*Isabella.* My Sebastiano, cherished friend to me,

Although to my own husband ever true!

*Antonio.* And, Sebastiano, cherished friend to me,

Although as my fond wife's man ever true!

*Fernando.* Then all is well and let us feast again.

*Violente.* Fernando, you speak wisely and best.

Lift high your cups. A monstrous horn of weal

To all who love my daughter and her love!

Health to the happy bride, health to her groom!

*Gaspero.* Health to the happy bridegroom and his bride!

*Fernando.* Joy to both, fruitful blessings on their love!

*Placida.* May graces and still passions fill their bed

With sweetnesses and hoped-for progeny!

*Fernando.* Come, Sebastiano, pledge the couple well.

By praising rival merits, we upraise Our own. The world first stamped our life with love:

Pay back the sum you owe with the same coin.

*Sebastiano.* May- may- may things be well- (he faints

*Fernando.* Ha! No, away. Air! Air!- Does he breathe still?

*Giulio.* Can a man die for love? I must see that.

*Fernando.* Come, servants, bear him to a warmer bed.



I foolishly unstrung his knot of woe.

Exeunt servants, bearing out  
Sebastiano

*Violente.* Now must you gape at  
stranger shows of love  
Than even this extravagance.

*Placida.* My lord,

No, not again; do not, I beg you still.

*Violente.* What, will there be no  
cheer from the bright grape,  
No loud and gay epithalamion?

Have you forgotten your own lover  
true?

*Placida.* (weeping

No, I have not, although you should,  
my lord.

*Violente.* Then bring my bowl, good  
Gaspero. *Gaspero.* That one?

*Violente.* Yes, Gaspero, that one.

*Placida.* Oh, let me die.

Exit Gaspero

*Violente.* Though many heart-felt  
wishes have been said,

I think no one will ever hear again  
A more unruly one than what my  
guests

Will be a witness to this very hour.

Re-enter Gaspero with a skull

Here all must drink except the bride  
and groom.

*Isabella.* How glad I am to be a bride  
today!

*Antonio.* How fortunate to be a  
groom today!

*Placida.* You frighten all the women,  
cruel lord,

And all the men stare, wonder, and  
sit still.

*Francesca.* (aside

Ha, Florida dear, this is the worst  
fright

That can benumb a belly great with  
child,

To all of them concealed except to  
you.

*Florida.* I nearly lose my turd with  
this strange sight.

*Violente.* I know our duchess can  
but drink with us,

But she'll carouse her full draught at  
the end.

Do you know, sirs, to whom  
belonged this skull?

Do you know, ladies, who once  
sighed his life

Away like a blank bolt with this  
fool's head?

*Placida.* Must I remember still? May I  
not rest

Where he lies still, and all because  
of me?

*Violente.* This is the head of my own  
duchess' love.

Is it not, wife? *Placida.* It is. I wish I  
were

Where lies the rest of his remains,  
quite still.

*Violente.* You speak the truth, my  
dear, a truth complete,

As you so rarely did when the  
smooth man

Was still alive and breathed words of  
love

To you in our bed while I was away.

I as a trophy keep his empty scone,  
Although his death may not be  
blamed on me,

But on himself, a man who died for  
love.

Do not laugh, sirs, do not smile,  
ladies: men

Have died for love and that we know  
quite well.

His name? His name was Sebastiano.  
First you, Fernando; fill up to the  
brim

This bowl of woe, erewhile a lover's  
brain

Replete with wine of love by her  
forsworn.

*Fernando.* O, loathsome mockery of  
love and grief!

*Violente.* Drink, drink, Fernando.  
Quaff a beverage

All men hope to obtain: a duchess'  
love,

A passionate bold duchess' truest  
love,

Only find your own duchess, not this  
one.

*Fernando.* (drinking and retching  
Ah, ah, I'm moved to tears by such  
high thoughts.

*Violente.* Now you, Francesca, sister  
to this groom,

Most worthy of my only daughter's  
love.

It will go round. Come, take the  
bowl and love.

*Francesca.* (drinking

If I do not lose all I hold in my  
Round belly, I am more unfortunate  
Than any who know me and all I do.

*Violente.* Now, Florida, friend to this  
cheerful bride

And to men, many men, besmir your  
lips

With wine of love you may some  
time call yours

On your own day. Be merry and  
drink full.

*Florida.* (drinking

Thanks to my best-loved duke, and  
duchess, too. -

Ah, pardon me. I am not well, I  
swear.

Exit Florida

*Violente.* Here, pining Giulio,  
towards you I turn

My placid eyes: lift your bowl, suck  
in breath,

And in a single motion all consume.

*Giulio.* (drinking

I'm the last man: may I be first one  
day.

*Violente.* My Amoretta, none remain  
but you,

Except my duchess; may you taste  
one day

Such loves, but may they be  
propitious.

*Amoretta.* (drinking

Love's salutations to you all! May  
peace

Crown them with every happiness  
you wish!

*Violente.* Are we not dearer than a  
lover, spouse?

*Placida.* Yes, husband, dearer far  
than all I know.

*Violente.* Your face seems as white  
as your flagon, wife.

*Placida.* And almost as cold as my  
love of old.

*Violente.* You will not quail and faint  
away, I hope.

*Placida.* O, never, my dear lord.

*Violente.* That we will see.

*Placida.* (drinking

To your health, lord.

*Violente.* The rose is never fresher  
and the sun

At rising never clearer than such  
cheeks  
And eyes. My duchess and my only  
love!

(kissing her; everyone applauds)

Will we not make the floor with  
dancing reel  
And shake as if loud thunder  
dwelled with us?

*Giulio.* And so we will, my lord.  
*Amoretta.* We promise you.

Exeunt all but Violente, Antonio, and  
Isabella

*Violente.* A boy tonight, Antonio!

*Antonio.* O, your grace-

*Violente.* A boy tonight, I say. No, do  
not blush

And quake. No girl can ever be  
compared

With lovely bouncing boyhood  
laughing loud.

Exeunt Violente, Antonio, and  
Isabella

## Act 1. Scene 2. Florida's house

Enter Sebastiano and Florida

*Florida.* Are you recovered yet? I  
swear by what

I hold most dear that your fall  
scared us all.

*Sebastiano.* Are you a woman? On  
what can you swear

And hope to be believed? *Florida.*  
Too bitter still.

*Sebastiano.* Spare us your  
protestations and your vows,

That only fools worse than you, I  
mean men,  
Believe and trust each season of the  
year.

*Florida.* What is your wish with me?  
Can you conceive

I split my sides with laughter thus to  
hear

My sex accused, when I know all too  
well

The lying brute beneath man's moral  
face?

*Sebastiano.* Enough of idle railing. I  
have come

Because I know you as Antonio's  
love,

Who may help to mar his intents  
tonight.

Does it not burn your entrails but to  
think

Antonio in another bed than yours?

*Florida.* It does. *Sebastiano.* What  
can be done to blast his hopes?

*Florida.* Perhaps we need do nothing.

*Sebastiano.* Nothing, ho?

Have I come nearly in tears to hear  
you

Mock me? Is this your answer to my  
plea?

*Florida.* O, often has he licked my  
globes of flesh

And beaten his stout arms in rage  
and woe

That on my altar he could pour no  
wine

In reverence of them. But yet I own  
The tongue and fingers to make the  
sweet one rise

To do man's work. Perhaps his wife  
does not.

*Sebastiano.* How likely can a foolish  
dream hurt him?

Has he not slept with her? *Florida*.  
No, he has not.

*Sebastiano*. Has not? O then, my  
heart, to hope arise.

*Florida*. I'll speak to Gaspero this  
very night,  
When we will know whatever may be  
heard.

*Sebastiano*. If ever I can cross him  
and you prove

To be a faithful ally, plunge your  
arms

Up to the elbow into treasure-chests  
Fat with gold coins. The ones I own  
are yours.

Take these as pledges of my wealth  
and faith.

*Florida*. Contented.

*Sebastiano*. Tomorrow we will meet.  
Do not fail me.

Exit Sebastiano; Firestone's voice is  
heard within

*Firestone*. Mother! Mother!

*Florida*. What is the wish of my son  
blithe and fair?

Enter Firestone

*Firestone*. A ridiculous man wishes  
to speak with you.

*Florida*. Who?

*Firestone*. I do not know him; he  
gave me sweets and said you may  
help him thrust into as narrow a  
place as any man can wish for.

*Florida*. They come to me either to  
blight or to amend.

*Firestone*. If it please you, mother,  
smile on my bastard face.

*Florida*. I always do.

*Firestone*. Mother, what's a bastard?

*Florida*. A hundred times have I told  
you. A child may come forth  
somewhat unexpectedly before his  
time.

*Firestone*. Ha! Ha! Ha! No doubt I'm  
more precocious than other boys of  
my own age.

*Florida*. I think so, little Firestone.

*Firestone*. A rare opportunity for  
success! The next time they flout me  
as the bastard boy of a bitch in heat,  
I'll tell them this: "A bastard is alive,  
muck-heaps still inside your  
mother's bellies!"

*Florida*. Then I'm sure they'll love  
you immensely better, son.

*Firestone*. Who is my father?

*Florida*. Impossible for anyone to  
know.

*Firestone*. Mother, give me  
permission to roam the streets later  
than usual tonight.

*Florida*. Why?

*Firestone*. I suspect the parson's fat  
daughter will be out alone and I  
cannot hold another night but must  
possess her now.

*Florida*. Has she said she would like  
to?

*Firestone*. No, but I think I can  
convince her.

*Florida*. How?

*Firestone*. With these sweet licorice  
roots she so hankers for.

*Florida*. Well thought on! Has that  
trick worked before?

*Firestone*. No, but a boy may hope, I  
guess.

*Florida*. Who will lie in bed with me  
tonight if you do not?

*Firestone*. O, mother, are you not  
young enough to find a pillowmate?

*Florida.* You do not enjoy me anymore?

*Firestone.* Better than pissing, but should I not also lie with girls of my own age, if I love them and they love me?

*Florida.* A little man already! Why do we have faith in you? Where have gentle knights of yore ridden to? Ah, my sadness! Modern men would rather sleep with strangers than with their own mothers, who love them better than most.

*Firestone.* I'm sorry for growing up, mother.

*Florida.* Why, so you must. Go play in the next room. Here comes this incontinent lover.

Exit Firestone and enter Giulio

*Giulio.* You know me.

*Florida.* Sir, I do.

*Giulio.* I love Amoretta, but she loves me as well as toads crossing her path in moonlight. I'm as little regarded as the filth that carelessly gathers inside her slippers.

*Florida.* How can I help you?

*Giulio.* I'm a reasonably good-looking man, I think, though not some smooth angel face who lies and cheats, swears great oaths and plays dice, swills and roars in tavern brawls.

*Florida.* So?

*Giulio.* Why does no woman give me half a chance?

*Florida.* Who can explain the blood that stirs or not?

*Giulio.* I can possess fair women in my dreams,

Sometimes not even there. What should be done?

To spend my time when such a wasting life

Does not deserve to have the name of life!

*Florida.* All the less likely, sir, to be concerned

And troubled with their maintenance. Then laugh.

*Giulio.* I think I'm damned, as only men can be.

*Florida.* It is impossible that in this world

No woman will have you. *Giulio.* O, some do,

But then I never want them. *Florida.* Tedious dolt!

*Giulio.* Am I so wearisome? Perhaps. But why

Do I hate those who love me, as if one

Who loves me cannot but deserve contempt?—

Give me a chamberpot. *Florida.* What, are you sick?

*Giulio.* O, quickly, otherwise I'll stain your floor.

*Florida.* Ho, Firestone! Bring my chamberpot at once.

Re-enter Firestone with a chamberpot

*Firestone.* Here, sir.

(Giulio pulls down his breeches and relieves himself

*Giulio.* Ah, ah! These are hard almonds I expel.

I'm almost killed by those, sweet madam.

*Florida.* I'm uncertain whether I care to discuss the state of your bowels, sir.

*Giulio.* Ah, ah, ah! At last, here are a few out; now for the rest.

*Florida.* Do not mind us, sir; do as you would at your house.

*Giulio.* Do you think I defecate for my amusement?

*Firestone.* O, mother, this is such a wonderful sight! I never knew men were so hairy. Will I soon be this way?

*Florida.* I doubt that very much.

*Firestone.* Do I stink as badly as he when I do the same?

*Florida.* Never.

*Firestone.* Why does our excrement always smell better than other people's?

*Florida.* Because of the effort it costs us.

*Giulio.* How old is your son?

*Florida.* Twelve.

*Giulio.* Does he aspire to grow older?

*Florida.* I hope he does.

*Giulio.* Then he should go away.

*Firestone.* O, mother, did I not tell you how jolly the fool is? and we barely know him yet!

*Florida.* Anyone who enters into this room can easily guess that. Does this often happen to you when you describe your amours?

*Giulio.* Most of the time, yes, I regret to say. Now I must trouble you again, madam.

*Florida.* Paper?

*Giulio.* Any ardent love-poem should be of help.

*Firestone.* I have not yet studied this week's printed sermon, mother; should I give it to him?

*Florida.* Is it very long?- Then do.

*Giulio.* I thank you.

*Florida.* After you are finished, we may discuss some hopes still be entertained in Amoretta's wooing.

*Giulio.* I knew the sight of an uncontrollably passionate lover would in the end melt your bowels.

Exeunt Florida, Giulio, and Firestone

Act 2. Scene 1. Antonio's house

Enter Antonio and Gaspero

*Gaspero.* A bride awaits you. You may not

Delay much further than you have Already in this business. Come, You must go in, and then go in.

*Antonio.* I know that, Gaspero, and that's my fear.

*Gaspero.* Why?

*Antonio.* I do not know and yet I fear.

*Gaspero.* No married man has ever thus behaved, And this your wedding night! What is the cause

Of such a bloodless palor with cold sweats?

*Antonio.* O, nothing, I'll go in at once, or soon.

*Gaspero.* There is no part in me without some mark Of trustworthy and silent secrecy.

*Antonio.* I will not tell you this.

*Gaspero.* Then a friend's sad.

Exit Antonio and enter Florida

*Florida.* Are you awake? *Gaspero.*  
Yes, madam, so are you.

Why? *Florida.* By my faith in man, I  
do not know.

*Gaspero.* Away! I think my friend- I  
cannot guess

The idle reason- comes back this  
same way.

Exit *Florida* and re-enter *Antonio*,  
trembling

*Antonio.* Hell is a cold house at  
break of day. *Gaspero.* What now?

*Antonio.* O, nothing, friend.  
I think I am a little mad, that's all.

Exit *Antonio* and re-enter *Florida*

*Florida.* So, is he gone again?

*Gaspero.* Yes, he is gone,  
But where? O, my *Antonio*, where  
are you?

*Florida.* I think the night's too cool  
for him. *Gaspero.* Out, hag!

*Florida.* He is out when he should be  
out and in.

*Gaspero.* Out, witchcraft, hellish  
stew of impudence!

*Florida.* *Antonio* should be mounted,  
riding hard

To the next bordertown. Is this a  
night

To stare, to stand, to mumble, or to  
mope?

No, no, *Antonio* should be up and  
shoot

His straightest arrows in one place  
to win

His prize and hers. A woman must  
expect

That, for this is her wedding night as  
well.

*Gaspero.* Hell-fish, if you vex me  
once more tonight,

I'll take this cudgel to you; on the  
grave

Of my cold father buried deep I  
swear,

And lay it in some heat with my two  
hands

Upon your sturdy back, strong from  
the weight

Of many men. Believe it, pierced  
stool.

Exit *Florida* and re-enter *Antonio*

*Antonio.* Quite, quite unmanned, my  
*Gaspero.* *Gaspero.* Hah, what?

*Antonio.* (weeping  
O, surely all men as I am

Can only be bewitched on such a  
night.

*Gaspero.* It is but one night, friend.

*Antonio.* True, true, one night.

I am quite foolish and my bride but  
smiles

With patience. Ah, too patient for an  
ass

Such I am sure to prove to be  
tonight.

Exit *Antonio* and re-enter *Florida*

*Florida.* I should prepare for him at  
breakfast-time

Two boiled cocks sprinkled with hot  
peppers. These

Can never harm and may do him  
some good.

*Gaspero.* True, strumpet, of all ages  
the worst yet.

Exeunt Gaspero and Florida

Act 2. Scene 2. Antonio's house

Enter Antonio and Francesca

*Francesca.* A fine day, brother.

Exit Antonio

Ha? Ha? Are you not well?

Enter Gaspero

A pleasant morning to you, Gaspero.

*Gaspero.* Good day to you, Francesca.

*Francesca.* Have you beheld Antonio on this day?

*Gaspero.* I have.

*Francesca.* I saw him just this minute and I thought

I saw a face as sad as grief can write  
On it with hard and broken metal pens.

*Gaspero.* I cannot guess the reason.  
His affairs

Of business are, as far as I can tell,  
Quite prosperous and safe.

*Francesca.* Ah, very strange.

*Gaspero.* Most certainly a bauble  
worries him.

How are you, girl? Will you not taste  
this plum?

They are quite good. *Francesca.* No,  
I'm too fruitful, man.

*Gaspero.* Have you well studied all  
your music books?

You must be soon examined, as you  
know.

*Francesca.* I know I'll be examined. I  
am near

My time and gag at the mere  
thought of it.

My songs hold heavy burdens  
recently.

*Gaspero.* From Venice I return,  
where Florida

Asked me to search out every tavern  
for

A man who left too soon, who failed  
to pay

For a small packet left behind. He's  
found.

Exit Gaspero, enter Isabella and  
Florida

*Isabella.* Alone, dear sister-in-law?

*Francesca.* (aside

No, not alone. You know, kind  
Florida,

I am at least two here, but that must  
not

Be known too soon, for otherwise I  
think

I lie in danger of my brother's love.

*Florida.* I know, my girl, and so will  
stay with you.

*Francesca.* Did you sleep well last  
night? *Isabella.* Far more than I  
Could have imagined. *Francesca.* I  
am glad of that.

*Florida.* And so am I. *Francesca.* I  
guess my brother is

No gamester and no midnight  
reveller.

He lets a woman sleep when it is  
time.

*Florida.* And sometimes even longer,  
I attest.

I hate those men who for their  
pleasure sweat

And when that's done say: "pleasant  
dreams tonight".



*Francesca.* O, may I never learn to know such men.

I will forswear my nuptials otherwise.

*Isabella.* No, you must not. We must breed; otherwise,

We are no women but a kind of pit Of nasty pleasures, dark and hollow ones.

*Florida.* I once thought that, but love soon changed my mind.

*Francesca.* A child comes soon enough. *Florida.* That's all too true.

*Isabella.* No, never too soon, in my judgment. *Francesca.* No?

(aside

I think, for sake of reputation, she would choose

To disagree with her opinion if

She knew what I know now. I think she would.

*Florida.* I know she would. *Isabella.*

So proudly would I grow

To hold a single child! *Francesca.*

(aside I should be proud

As well, but what small cause have I to swell

In pride for mine! *Florida.*

Unfortunate and sad

Deluded girl of sixteen! *Francesca.* What of that?

I cannot stay at sixteen all my life.

Re-enter Antonio

*Isabella.* Antonio, have you thought of marriage yet

For your impatient sister? She has said-

Exit Antonio

Ha, certainly, he never heard one word.

*Florida.* I think there's something of some fearful taste

That brews within his mind. *Isabella.*

A trifle, girl!

Re-enter Antonio

I say, Antonio, can you hear a wife?

Your sister's sixteen years of age and yet

She thinks already of a husband's bed.

*Antonio.* Too soon. Why marry? Foolishness, that's all.

*Francesca.* (aside to Florida

If he knew what I know, most certainly

The master would soon change his blockish mind.

*Antonio.* Do you jest or not? Do you love someone?

*Francesca.* (aside to Florida

I love someone, but he does not love me,

Except he left his package to remind

Me I once knew him. *Florida.* Trust me, fondest girl,

That trifler will not flee so easily.

I hear our Gaspero has nosed him out

In Venice, and will bring him back to you.

*Francesca.* No, brother, I do not yet hunger for

A naked man in bed.

(aside to Florida

My stomach's too full as it is, I'm sure.

*Antonio.* I would have wagered my best shirt that she

Could only answer in that fashion,  
wife.

*Francesca.* (aside to Florida  
If my Alzido were an honorable  
man,  
He would no doubt have lost his bet.  
And then  
I would have liked to win that shirt,  
for I  
Need christening-cloths and stuff for  
baby caps  
As my case stands, and what a case  
it is!

*Isabella.* And yet the married life, I  
think, is best.

*Antonio.* Ah, the most beauteous  
answer I have heard

In all my life!

(kissing her

*Isabella.* What, husband, is it? Why?

(kissing him

*Francesca.* (aside

Most terrible examples for the  
young

To see such kissing married folks as  
these!

No wonder that we do what we  
should not.

*Florida.* Unless I gravely mistake  
your man,

Here comes the lover with his  
packages.

*Francesca.* I'm glad. I bear a bundle  
for him, too.

Enter Alzido, attended

*Isabella.* Alzido, you are welcome to  
this house.

*Francesca.* (aside to Florida

More welcome still to me. I stand a  
chance

Now to obtain some honor at long  
last.

*Alzido.* Here, fellows, bag and  
package through this door

And bottles in the cellar. *Antonio.*  
What are these?

*Alzido.* Sir, I was entertained by you  
some weeks

Ago; this is some faint return for all  
Alzido got.

*Francesca.* (aside to Florida

He gets and also he begets, I know

That to my cost. *Alzido.* This to the  
larder, boy;

We'll sort out pies and pastries by  
ourselves.

Exeunt servants

*Antonio.* Your merit is the sole cause  
of our cheer

And dull munificence. *Alzido.* Let no  
one say

Alzido is a base ungrateful sponge.

*Francesca.* (aside to Florida

More like a spout. He drenched me  
and since then

The flowers in my garden grow  
apace.

*Alzido.* This is your sister, I believe.

*Antonio.* It is.

Do you remember her? *Alzido.* Oh,  
certainly.

*Francesca.* (aside

For otherwise, he would be the  
worst rat

That any cat could chew. *Florida.* A  
pity that

You have already swallowed him.

*Francesca.* I know.

(Francesca takes Alzido aside

So, have you come at last? *Alzido*.  
Doubt that the sun  
Will rise, doubt that the moon  
attracts the floods,  
But never doubt *Alzido's* love for  
you.

*Florida*. Our *Gaspero* in Venice  
seized this thief  
Of woman's honor and her hopes of  
love.

*Alzido*. True, I admit when the base  
fellow saw

Me on my gondola, I pushed my cap  
Below my eyes. I also will concede,  
when

He spoke to me, that I pretended  
not

Ever to have known him at any time.

*Francesca*. (weeping

Here is men's love we hear so much  
about!

*Alzido*. Yet when I thought of my  
*Francesca* caught,

Abandoned, left on the plate on  
which I

Had eaten my whole fill, I could no  
more

Swim in the world, and so came  
back to her.

*Francesca*. What should be done  
now? *Alzido*. There are ways and  
means,

Girl, means and ways. Here's  
*Gaspero* to help.

Although unknowingly, he'll make  
all well.

Re-enter *Gaspero*

*Gaspero*. A letter from your mother.

*Antonio*. Is she well?

We hear the Venice air infects her  
eyes.

*Gaspero*. O, very well. *Florida*. Let us  
help with these bags.

Exeunt *Gaspero* and *Florida*

*Antonio*. *Francesca*, you must go to  
her. *Francesca*. Not now.

*Antonio*. I say you must. What, so  
ungrateful, girl?

*Francesca*. It is not a good time for  
me to see

A mother now, that's obvious.

*Alzido*. No, it is.

You should. *Francesca*. I should?

*Alzido*. I think you should.

*Francesca*. I will.

*Antonio*. She'll stay at our  
farmhouse ten miles away.

Enter *Sebastiano*

Ha, that man here? *Isabella*. You  
know my loyalty.

Though a neglected rival of your  
love,

Do not forbid him from our house.  
Our love

May blossom in the garden plot of  
friends,

Who should grow in good time less  
like the weeds,

More like the trellis-work of our  
delights.

*Antonio*. Sir, you are welcome here.

*Sebastiano*. I know I am.

To the bridegroom health and  
prosperity!

From *Florida* we hear that you have  
had

Some good rest. *Isabella*. Feed on  
our Venetian cakes,

Good *Sebastiano*. *Sebastiano*. On  
those as well as

All sweets I may be offered in this house.

*Isabella.* Will you not taste them, too, Francesca? *Francesca.* No, I grow too fat. *Isabella.* I noticed that. Then eat

This apple. *Francesca.* My name is not Eve and it

Is not the season with me now for fruits.

*Alzido.* (taking Francesca aside) All is provided for. The mother you Will see is very wise and resolute To do some good, relieving your fair shape

Of its worst burden. Say, my apricot, My pleasing rounded fruit of love and hope,

Why does a woman on man's love complain,

When a house and a letter make all well?

Exeunt Alzido, Francesca, Antonio, Isabella, and Sebastiano

Act 2. Scene 3. The ducal palace

Enter Giulio and Florida

*Giulio.* I sup with witches. Do you say, moon-bird,

That Amoretta will hear me again?

*Florida.* She will. *Giulio.* What did you say to her of me?

*Florida.* That you were as good and proper a man as any in Ravenna, and clean, by the evidence of my own eyes.

*Giulio.* Did she seem to believe you?

*Florida.* I think so. I also reminded her that you are very rich and she

very poor, except in the duchess' love.

*Giulio.* That may do well enough.

*Florida.* Luckily and at a good time she comes.

Exit Florida and enter Amoretta

*Amoretta.* O, blessed powers, never known and so

Never to be acknowledged in my thoughts,

What secret sins have I committed here

That make you send this punishment to me?

*Giulio.* A gentle punishment. Come to my heart.

*Amoretta.* What, will you rape me in the ducal court?

*Giulio.* I know a room of quietness and grace,

A bower of deep love built for our times.

*Amoretta.* A weasel on my bosom! Out, away,

Rude thing of woods and common dunghill paths!

*Giulio.* Are these my hopes? Farewell then, Giulio goes.

Exit Giulio and enter Placida

*Placida.* Speak, Amoretta, have you done for me

What I asked you to do? *Amoretta.* What did you say?

*Placida.* Destruction of my hopes and yours as well!

*Amoretta.* You startle me, your grace. What should I do?

What potent matter have I left undone?

*Placida.* Did you not promise me-  
no, swore to me-

That you would give to Giulio's  
candid love

A loving entertainment and the way  
By which I can perform on him my  
will?

*Amoretta.* That promise flew away  
from my sad thoughts,

A raven lost in forests grim and  
bare,

So absolutely I abhor that man.

*Placida.* With trifling I have done.  
Learn of my wrath

And stern displeasure. Either you  
will smile

And in the hot-house of persistent  
love

Taste all the fruits the man may  
offer, or

You are unknown to me  
forevermore.

*Amoretta.* O, pardon, my good  
duchess. To your will

My loyalty and truth have always  
kneeled

As in a consecrated shrine of grace.

But this you ask of me- O, this-

I cannot speak my shame. *Placida.*  
No shame exists.

*Amoretta.* A virgin I am still, a  
perfect one,

As in old times old people once  
beheld,

And, seeing, still admire, and,  
staring, love.

From tricks in ages of indifference

Let me fly always, keeping to myself.

I like the unicorn pace quiet paths

And always shun what others loudly  
seek.

*Placida.* Our Giulio is the steed to  
cover you.

*Amoretta.* I need physicians when I  
hear him named.

Ugh, why must I do this? *Placida.* Do  
not ask why.

Great ones do, then interpret as you  
will.

My bed must be by Giulio warmed  
this night

And you in it.- No, do not groan and  
sweat.

Prepare to bleed one way or else  
another, girl.

If you fail now, all services  
performed

On countless tasks are dreams of no  
avail.

Spurn vain ideas women in our time

Have quite abandoned. Taste the  
choicest sweet:

Man, brutish blissful man. *Amoretta.*

Ha, is it not

His mincing steps I hear? *Placida.*

Yours but to take.

Exeunt Placida and re-enter Giulio

*Giulio.* I have forgotten my hat. -  
Here it is.

*Amoretta.* No, Giulio, stay. *Giulio.*  
Do I hear what I hear?

*Amoretta.* I have been far too hasty.  
You may be

As loving and as kind as any man.

*Giulio.* I know I can. I know I know I  
can.

*Amoretta.* Meet me tonight in my  
room. *Giulio.* Heaven's door

Has opened; we are here. *Amoretta.*  
Will you come, dear?

*Giulio.* Can I walk? Can I speak?

*Amoretta.* Shy bashfulness

Prevents more words. *Giulio.* I do  
not ask for words.

Exeunt Giulio and Amoretta

Act 2. Scene 4. Antonio's farmhouse

Enter Alzido and Florida

*Alzido.* I love to make them but hate to be troubled by them.

*Florida.* Then you do well to rid yourself of them.

*Alzido.* (giving her money) Here's for your labor.

*Florida.* Has the woman arrived?

*Alzido.* In the next room. Is she experienced in this way?

*Florida.* Absolutely.

*Alzido.* She will not hurt Francesca?

*Florida.* Rest at ease. I once was served by her and well.

*Alzido.* Nevertheless, I'm somewhat unquiet.

Enter Francesca

*Francesca.* Is she here?

*Alzido.* She is.

*Francesca.* This farmhouse reminds me of a bygone December tale. I'll next see the ox and lamb, I'm sure.

*Alzido.* If you do, they are unlikely to kneel at this event.

*Francesca.* That's true. Few would adore

Or even choose to see a virgin whore.

*Alzido.* Go to her.

*Francesca.* But, Alzido, I do not yet require Lucina's help.

*Alzido.* I can deceive you no further. Know that we are not here to deliver it, Francesca, but to take it away.

*Francesca.* You mean, abort it?

*Alzido.* Yes.

*Francesca.* Why? I know many loving parents without child.

*Alzido.* This expedient is simpler and I prefer it. Do you want your brother to know of our misdeeds?—No, I dare say you do not. Is this no truth and wisdom I speak? A morning's pain and we are safe.

*Francesca.* Do you hear, Bertino? They want to scrape you out into spoon-meat.

*Alzido.* This is without doubt the faster and the surer way. Trust me.

*Francesca.* I know a woman should trust the one who thrusts, but why am I uncertain?

*Alzido.* Go, we'll wait for you here.

*Francesca.* I'm frightened.

*Alzido.* It should not last long. Florida says so.

*Florida.* Very safe and quick.

*Alzido.* Go inside; your time is now.

*Francesca.* Do you hear, Bertino? You expected to come out and be kissed, but instead you must be tossed breathless in an egg-basket or on a pile of used straw.

Exit Francesca

*Alzido.* I faint in a fever of fear.

*Florida.* Why?

*Alzido.* What if she dies? Will I be arraigned for murder? I study no lawbooks.

*Florida.* All will be well.

(Francesca moans within)

*Alzido.* Ha! The hateful hag is killing my Francesca.

*Florida.* No, no.

*Alzido.* Why does she moan? Is this the normal way?

*Florida.* It is.

*Alzido.* What have I done? I was happy and brave enough while engendering it.

*Florida.* In a short while, you'll be happy again.

*Alzido.* Not if my Francesca's hurt by a brutal witch.

*Florida.* She'll suffer no harm, I think.

*Alzido.* Is it nearly finished?

*Florida.* Be patient.

(Francesca shrieks within

*Alzido.* Now, now, now! Is that the normal way?

*Florida.* I never cried out so.

*Alzido.* Francesca is dying and you stare at her murderer.

*Florida.* No, no.

*Alzido.* She's dying, I can tell.

*Florida.* No.

*Alzido.* Misery of love! Why am I poor? We could have married.

*Florida.* All may yet be well.

*Alzido.* I know what can never be.

*Florida.* What do you know?

*Alzido.* I know by instinct something's wrong.

*Florida.* Instinct, tush! What should a man's instinct do here?

*Alzido.* I'm in pieces with worry and dread.

*Florida.* Sit down quietly.

*Alzido.* I wish my own organ were to her knives and tongs exposed, cold and cruel instruments on warm and tender flesh.

*Florida.* You have succeeded at last to make me less tranquil.

*Alzido.* Why is she quiet?

*Florida.* Cries worry you and then silence worries you.

*Alzido.* She's dead.

*Florida.* No.

*Alzido.* And the wizard's whore has escaped through the back-door.

*Florida.* Your love-match is a back-door.

*Alzido.* I'll kill her.

*Florida.* I'll go to them.

*Alzido.* Do, do, do.

Exit Florida

*Alzido.* Tell me whether I died.

Re-enter Florida

*Florida.* All should be well.

*Alzido.* A lie!

*Florida.* No lie. She sweats and grins.

*Alzido.* I know she's dying, and I with no ready cash to bury her. The brother will challenge me at sword-point and kill me.

*Florida.* That's not necessarily so.

*Alzido.* I'll die forever.

*Florida.* Not necessarily so.

*Alzido.* Is she well?

*Florida.* I think she is.

Exit Florida

*Alzido.* Is she well? Is she well? Is she well?

Re-enter Florida and Francesca

My heart's an ice floe lost in polar winds of my own breath. How are you, Francesca? Speak.

*Francesca.* We must go a-riding this morning.

*Alzido.* That's my Francesca!

*Francesca.* Saddle up our horses.

*Alzido.* I live, I live.

*Florida.* No, let me do it.

Exit Florida

*Alzido.* I reel; all's well; I lurch for very joy.

*Francesca.* You must not trouble me today, Alzido.

*Alzido.* O, no, no, no, no, no, no.

*Francesca.* Does my brother expect me back tonight?

*Alzido.* He does, because the mother changed her mind and stayed at home.

*Francesca.* All the better for being prevented. (staggering)

*Alzido.* Ha! Are you dying again?

*Francesca.* No, I stand. No worse than a momentary spell.

*Alzido.* Loss of blood, I fear. O, my Francesca, what a life the improvident lead!

*Francesca.* How monstrously light I feel!

*Alzido.* Handsomely, only with a sharper nose, like the cock's in the steeple.

*Francesca.* And how pale I look! Take away my mirror, lest we betray ourselves to my brother.

*Alzido.* Alzido is Francesca's. Women are protected by men. Are you cold? Spread carefully my cloak on your shoulders and lift the top part to the ears. O my Francesca, should I carry you to the horse? Should I warm you in my arms? Are you hungry?

Re-enter Florida

*Florida.* Away to Ravenna!

Exeunt Alzido, Francesca, and Florida

Act 3. Scene 1. The ducal palace

Enter Giulio and Amoretta

*Giulio.* Eyes to bewitch and to deceive poor men!

*Amoretta.* What do you mean?

*Giulio.* To seem like modesty  
In marble statuary, gazing down  
As if men spoke from floors! Then here you are,

With moist hand guiding some new lover to

A bed like north of Sweden, manless till

This night. O, you are fine ones, I admit.

Before we enter, kiss me. *Amoretta.* O, must I?

Can you not hold? *Giulio.* I can, and that you'll see.

I'll hold, then shoot off, hold and then shoot off,

Till you are quite bedrenched with me, my girl.

*Amoretta.* Come, enter here. *Giulio.* The maiden weeps for her

Soon-to-be cut-off queen, virginity.  
That queen's the murderess of love: for her,

We must prepare a basket and a sword.

*Amoretta.* Bewails for more than that, if you but knew.



Exeunt Giulio and Amoretta, enter Placida and Violente

*Violente.* You will not keep away for a long time?

*Placida.* No.

*Violente.* You know how pressing are my ardors, dear.

*Placida.* I do.

*Violente.* Hot not-to-be-denied-in-any-fashion love.

*Placida.* I know it.

*Violente.* I know your modest ways. O, patient I

Can be, if you do not lock up such charms

For many tedious hours, far too unfair.

*Placida.* I will not.

*Violente.* I kiss your mouth, expecting all the rest.

Exit Violente; Placida locks the chamber door; re-enter Amoretta, vomiting

*Amoretta.* O, stars, I loathe your lamentable light, abhor and curse my organs of pleasure.

*Placida.* Ha! What's this? What do you mean with uncouthness to fly in thus and grimace with disgust when you should smile with good cheer?

*Amoretta.* O, he entices me to abominations I cannot breathe to name.

*Placida.* How!

*Amoretta.* Ugh, the hair, the blood, that horrid grin! I faint, I die.

*Placida.* You are mad, I think, or else he is.

*Amoretta.* When I saw him naked, I could not hold my urine.

*Placida.* You must go back to him. *Amoretta.* No, never, no.

*Placida.* Go back, I say, till he is finished with

His business. Then return more sensibly.

Exit Amoretta; shrieks and sounds of cutting are heard within

Ha!

*Violente.* (knocking at the chamber door

Come, are you ready yet? No courtesy

For a most potent duke? No reverence?

I swell like a sharp steeple, pointing high

Towards my heaven, and you lie as wide

As a church-door, but what of that? I trudge

As a much wearied pilgrim in your house:

Let me not freeze like the poor mice in it.

*Placida.* No, in an instant, dearest man of mine.

I do all this for you.

Re-enter Amoretta

*Amoretta.* Lost, done, and how unlovely it was!

At least a woman cannot die from that.

Spurn me away. I can behold no more.

Exit Amoretta and re-enter Giulio wounded on chest and thigh, with a knife and without his breeches

*Giulio.* Ha, no! The duchess! *Placida.* Yes, the duchess, man.

You have sped well, I hear. *Giulio.* I am deceived.

*Placida.* In a worse fashion than you can suspect.

Hear: you must either die or kill the duke.

*Giulio.* Ha, murder? *Placida.* Choose: to kill or else be killed.

*Giulio.* Oh, either choice is certain death to man.

So die out gales of lust, and I too young

To know their end, but know them grieving now.

*Placida.* The man who is not to bright honor born

Should sweat with labor. Plow a man to death

And you will reap my thanks and gratitude.

*Giulio.* Ha, can one speak of honor with the voice

Of murder? Why should I push off the duke?

*Violente.* (within

Are you still there, dear wife? *Giulio.*

Is it the duke?

*Placida.* That hated voice you must choke off.- Yes, sir;

I labor for your moment. *Violente.* Well, well, well.

*Placida.* I'll say your sudden entry in my room

Was for man's usual purpose when he peeps

At night on one lone woman all in tears

Surprised, and loathing what she knows must come:

That, the vile act of force and vicious lust.

*Giulio.* Your room? I am undone by women's wiles.

*Placida.* A husband's worried looks suspended are

On a wife's trusted lips to hear the truth.

I'll say you thought the duke was far away

To hunt. For added versimilitude,

I'll cut myself in places man holds dear,

Reveal desire's intemperate designs.

Behold your blood-stained shirt: I'll swear these wounds

Are badges desperate of my defense.

I'll be believed. The duke will first kill you

With eyes, and then take out that rusty knife

Most often I have seen him use on hares.

*Giulio.* And so have I. His violence, and that knife-

Mine own's too little next to his.

*Placida.* Give it to me.- Ah, very stiff and hot.

Think in what misery next to our bed

You'll lie, cut as the trophy of his love,

Like any hart bled white. Accursed and shamed,

And for a deed not contemplated!

*Giulio.* O,

This *Violente* blows in gusts of hate.

*Placida.* Can you doubt it? What, he? Restraint he knows

By hearsay only. Ha, a wife alone

At night, dismayed, with wounds on her and you?

If you protest unlikely innocence,  
By my suggestion, swearing on my faith,

This duke will ask for proof,  
demand from you

To swell and rise as a man: how will you,

When all reserves are shot off, not a drop

Remaining that a thirsty flea might drink?

*Giulio.* He'll drink blood from the top part of my skull.

*Placida.* Hold, all's not lost. Why stamp and rave? All's well.

I'll choose a fit occasion that will not

Hurt you, a time of perfect safety.

*Giulio.* I'm on a voyage none has ever known.

*Placida.* Here I am, husband, greet the best of wives.

*Giulio.* Are you mad? Will you let him enter now?

*Placida.* (stabbing herself between the legs

Yes, but not here at any time again.

Re-enter *Violente*

*Violente.* Hah, *Giulio* here, at night, in my wife's room!

*Placida.* No, do not kill him yet with blood-shot eyes,

Or take your dagger out of its cold sheath.

We have found him out, husband. Thinking to

Slip into *Amoretta's* couch of snow,  
He quite mistook the door and entered here,

Stumbling and falling in confusion.

*Violente.* Ha! Ha! That's excellent.

*Placida.* Is it not so?

*Giulio.* I'm always woman's idiot, your kind grace.

Oh, pardon me. *Violente.* I do.

*Giulio.* And pardon me,

I pray, most honored madam.

*Placida.* So, I will.

Exit *Giulio*

*Violente.* Now for hot cherry in a bowl of cream.

*Placida.* Your cherry's bleeding.

*Violente.* What of that, dear wife?

I like it so. *Placida.* Then mystically we'll touch.

Exeunt *Violente* and *Placida*

Act 3. Scene 2. Antonio's garden  
before the glass-house

Enter *Gaspero* and *Florida*

*Florida.* (to Antonio within

I never had it half so deep and hot.

A phallus? Not at all, a baker's peel,

Which slides the wholesome bread in, glutting it.

Lie still. Though not your spouse, think well of me;

Think of me often, in the night and day;

Be careful of me, very careful, love.

*Gaspero.* Again? Is this where wedded men should wend?

*Florida.* Surprised! I did not wish to have you learn

Of these night-visits, for should she find out,

He'll be ashamed, no more, but I destroyed.

*Gaspero.* You need not fear tonight. She is in church,

On her knees praying that Priapus' skill

May bless her husband with his benediction.

*Florida.* The fountains that so sweetly gush in me

Are blocked in her. *Gaspero.* How is it possible?

What herb or spice do you administer?

*Florida.* The only potion I bestow is love.

*Gaspero.* Does not his wife burn with an equal love?

*Florida.* She does, but this wife's fire congeals his ice.

Exit Florida and enter Sebastiano

*Sebastiano.* Is it not Florida? I like her well:

A doubtful creature, creeping in at night,

The falling-backward kind all men enjoy.

The strumpet leaves with coins, and pleasure, too.

But yet Antonio should be blamed. The pit

He swallows and the raisin spits away.

*Gaspero.* How is this your concern? What do you here?

*Sebastiano.* O, nothing, friend of a sad house, that's all.

*Gaspero.* Away! Your presence cannot do us good.

*Sebastiano.* I am a foreigner in my own heart.

I know but Isabella, that is all

I know or ever wish to know on earth.

*Gaspero.* Except for my Antonio, I do not

Know man bewitched in passion as you are.

*Sebastiano.* That's too apparent to my grief and his.

Enter Isabella

*Isabella.* Are you both here again? Do you intend

To sleep with my lord, hah? When will we rest?

*Sebastiano.* (aside to Gaspero

I know why she is waspish. *Gaspero.* So do I.

She does not take in gratis what my friend

Bestows for money. Let us fly in haste.

Exeunt Gaspero and Sebastiano, enter Alzido and Francesca

*Isabella.* You are the man to win a woman to

Confusion. What strange turpitudes of night

Man helps a woman to! *Alzido.* Who, I? *Isabella.* You, sir.

My husband and I must thank you again

For pains bestowed with such Franscescan zeal.

I hope you did not ride her hard today.

*Alzido.* O, no, no, no. That was impossible.

*Francesca.* My belly is too sore for that. *Isabella.* No doubt.

*Alzido.* I leave you ladies to the sweets of night.

Exit Alzido

*Isabella.* (throwing a sheet of paper at her  
Read this and blush. Your mother changed her mind  
And never reached the farmhouse. But I did,  
Where I a woman met who spoke of you  
And wrote a summary of your travails,  
What she did and to whom, what money was  
Bestowed on her- for extra pieces she did that.  
Weep if you can. Your brother and I were  
Mistaken in you. What strange impudence  
Has done may be forgiven, if you will  
Shake hands with folly, spurning her away.  
You may still find a sister in my love,  
As I adhere to goodness, truth, respect,  
To which your blood cannot submit as yet.  
Antonio will not learn at any time  
Of this mistake, unless I find in you  
More tastes of the same kind, which can but heave  
A brother's stomach with some matter worse  
Than what was pulled unwillingly from you.  
I leave the pages as a reference.

Exit Isabella and re-enter Azildo

*Azildo.* I come back to find out the cause of her

Distemper. What does she know and from whom?

*Francesca.* Shame always seeks to hide, but yet by shame  
Is found out bleeding. Twice was I required

To lift my smock and smart from strokes of rods.

Her tongue's a sharper probe on my mind than

Steel ones made for flesh. Saintly church

In a dry woman's mouth! Her teeth a text,

Her face a sermon! This I'll not abide.

Now must lasciviousness crouch back in fear

From any look of hers, and tremble still

Whenever she may whisper to her mate.

No, that must never be. Disgrace her first.

*Azildo.* Your brother! Later we must talk of this.

Exit Azildo and enter Antonio

*Antonio.* My Isabella told me you came back.

Did you ride lusty horses at the farm?

*Francesca.* Yes, but one of them threw me on my back.

Is your wife within hearing? *Antonio.* No, she went

To bed. Why do you shake your head and gaze

So pale in fear? What, trembling?  
Are you ill?

*Francesca.* I'm always punished as a  
fool to take

The grief of others and make them  
my own.

*Antonio.* Who has a cause for  
sorrow? *Francesca.* You, I fear.

*Antonio.* Why? *Francesca.* You are  
much deceived in your new wife.

*Antonio.* Ha, Isabella? Are my  
torments worse

Than even I know of? Say what you  
know.

*Francesca.* I love her as a woman for  
your sake,

For you chose her, but when she  
wrongs your bed,

I can no longer love her as a spouse.

*Antonio.* She cheats? *Francesca.* She  
is too light. *Antonio.* A woman light

Is in a husband's mouth a heavy pill.

*Francesca.* I find apparent signs.

*Antonio.* With whom? Unwind.

*Francesca.* I can reveal no more, for  
I grieve much.

Exit Francesca

*Antonio.* No, no, no, no!

Exit Antonio

Act 3. Scene 3. Antonio's house

Enter Isabella and Fernando

*Fernando.* May fortune favor your  
best wishes still!

*Isabella.* Your business is with me?

*Fernando.* With you, and yet  
My business much concerns your  
husband, too.

*Isabella.* Then speak. My morning  
tasks are almost done.

I can attend to you. *Fernando.* Few  
words, yet in

These few, I hope that faithfulness  
and truth

Will shine on me as one to be  
believed.

*Isabella.* I know you are my  
Sebastiano's friend;

You need no better introduction.

*Fernando.* Thus,

To be brief, quiet goodness is  
abused.

You bear the married burdens, but  
there's one,

A strumpet bold, who from you  
takes the joys

You should possess for all your  
labors done.

*Isabella.* Ha, what? A harlot rules my  
house? Who, sir?

*Fernando.* A costly mischief, as all of  
them are,

In money, but in grief of families

Far more and sometimes deadly.

*Isabella.* Lies, mere lies.

You are rejected Sebastiano's friend.

He still invents new ruin to my  
hopes

To further but his own. Still he  
believes

He will obtain me, but he never will.

Get out from our house. He will  
never more

Becloud our unstained bed with  
false reports.

*Fernando.* Your faith and hope on  
this non-husband are

Too confident, abusing you, so that

Your best friends are accounted  
enemies

And this bad enemy your dearest friend.

*Isabella.* Your tongue is sugared poison. Out, away!

*Fernando.* I will reveal the name, the time and place.

Meet me alone tonight at the glass-house.

*Isabella.* I am the daughter of a mighty duke,

From whom advancement in our city flows

As from the widest fountain. Prove this true,

And you will gain not only my respect

But many clear advantages of faith.

*Fernando.* I will deserve them, on my truest word.

Exeunt Isabella and Fernando

Act 4. Scene 1. The ducal palace

Enter Violente and Amoretta

*Violente.* To bed. I wish I had done more today.

I never seem to find the time to do What I should, only to my pleasures pricked.

*Amoretta.* My duke's beloved by all his servants true.

*Violente.* I am a man of pleasure. Nothing have

I done of worth. Say that I die tonight,

Who then will grieve for me? No one. Today

A duke, the fount of power and resource,

Tomorrow what I dare not think of yet!

*Amoretta.* We should not peep into such habitats.

*Violente.* I am a man of pleasure. Nothing have

I said of worth. My wife does not love me.

My friends are friends to titles, not to me.

*Amoretta.* You are too vehement against yourself.

*Violente.* I am a man of pleasure. Nothing have

I loved of worth. The partner of my bed

I have most mightily abused and scorned.

Why? She did well to cuckold me, and then

Perhaps she does so still. I should have done

The same to her. Say that I die tonight,

Is there a man who can say: "There's a life

Worth living!" No, not one. I nothing do

And therefore I to nothingness will go.

Exit Violente and enter Placida

*Placida.* Go sleep in the adjacent room. *Amoretta.* Why?- Why?

*Placida.* You may not know all that I wish to do.

But I need friends tonight, and truest ones.

*Amoretta.* May both your graces sleep well and rest long.

*Placida.* That wish should but apply to my loved duke,

For I'm too busy to sleep well and long.

Exit Amoretta

Come, are you here? Here is some work for man.

Enter Giulio through a trap-door

You rise exactly at ripe fortune's hour.

Here is the dagger; he lies in our bed.

There is no more to say. *Giulio*. I cannot do

What you wish me to. *Placida*. Ha! Cannot, cannot?

You know he only half believes our tale.

This morning this duke frowned, looked up at me

And frowned again, then said: "Our Giulio loves

Another; he's no man to love but one."

What do you say? Tonight he'll either learn

His wife was raped by you, or nothing know,

But disappear where countless dukes have gone.

*Giulio*. The man who on a woman has no faith

Is on the direct path to happiness.

As barren in their pity as in love!

To whom should I beseech to guide my arm

Aright? There is no help for such a deed.

Exit Giulio

*Placida*. Have you done it?- Can dukes sleep quietly?

Re-enter Giulio, covered with blood

*Giulio*. No water is so clear as to wash this.

*Placida*. In a blank daze? I must be sure of all.

Exit Placida

*Giulio*. Is this no perfect work? A man is born,

And that's a miracle of nature, yet In a brief second, I undo and quell

This miracle. Ah, I deserve the same.

*Placida*. (within

This is the sight I have most often dreamt

Of, yet it is no dream. I thank my fates.

Whatever may occur, at least one deed

Accomplished in this world makes everything

Well and worth living for. O, highest joy,

As mighty as his pledges of my love!

Re-enter Placida

Help, murder, murder, murder!

*Giulio*. Ha! What's this?

Re-enter Amoretta

*Amoretta*. Is it my dearest friend who screams of death?

*Placida*. Help, murder, murder, murder! There he stands,

Your Giulio, wrapped in a duke's blood, up to

His arm-pits soaked and staring at his deed!



*Giulio.* I dream all this, that's certain, I but dream.

Exit Giulio

*Placida.* Pursue the murderer. Bright torches now,  
To light the way of killers to their pit!

*Amoretta.* O, evil enters into every house.

*Placida.* Pursue the villain. Lights! Lights! Who attends?

Lights on a crime, lights on such treachery!

Enter servants

Go, fellows, run. Seize cudgels, staves, and knives;

Tonight you must tug hard a duke's death's-man

And tear a man from life, who has performed

A deed that makes the bright world night to me.

He who returns without his guilty head

Will never find again his mistress' face.

Exeunt servants

*Amoretta.* O, villain-slave! What was his purpose here?

*Placida.* Hear, gape amazed. He tried to ravish me,

But was prevented by the worthy duke.

*Amoretta.* So lust and murder marry for our harm.

*Placida.* You see what your failed work of yesterday

Has done to me tonight. That turned him loose.

I am a window, girl. I languish, faint-  
*Amoretta.* Come, come, I'll help you to a restful bed.

*Placida.* Tomorrow, I will speak to Sebastiano,

My love, my pillar, and my only prop.

Who else may aid a pining widow's plight?

I follow you, my friend, my Amoretta!

Exeunt Placida and Amoretta

Act 4. Scene 2. Antonio's garden  
before the glass-house

Enter Sebastiano and Fernando

*Sebastiano.* Antonio's pen is broken and the ink

Befouls and smutches his resourceless face.

On many nights, from Florida's account,

He writhes, a goose that clucks for grains outside

His yard when a great treasure of pure food

Lies next to his face, which he cannot pierce,

Because his beak is much too weak and blunt.

If you know that the force of life is love,

Let pity enter into gentle ears.

*Fernando.* You are a frantic fool if you doubt me.

*Sebastiano.* With your own eyes behold foul infamy

Prepared against my lady. Can you doubt

It is no wrong I offer but true love?  
Must hushed adultery be helped by us,

In silent shadows freezing with mute looks?

*Fernando.* No.

*Sebastiano.* My lady is too nobly generous

To be thus scorned and mocked. I'll not have it.

*Fernando.* I hourly praise your honorable goals.

*Sebastiano.* Here is a woman good for nothing but

For men of honor to make good use of.

Enter Florida

*Florida.* Is my Antonio here?- Do you stare, fools?

I say Antonio, my Antonio, for  
He's mine, despite the world and hypocrites.

*Fernando.* We loathe to hear you name your shameful lust.

*Florida.* Toads of a moral swamp I never heed.

Exit Florida

*Sebastiano.* A whore's delights are false. Clog up your ears:

I'll speak again, and then again and more

And more against black concupiscence

And marketable. Prick such loves and soon.

We find Antonio wedded: may we hope

To see the youth respect his love?  
Oh, no.

He is disabled in his discontented blood,

Disoriented, disappointed, and  
Discordant, worse than even that he is

Dismayed, discredited, disgraced,  
disarmed,

Disfigured, as spent warriors are, to be

Discharged. The man should be disdained as well.

Oh, no; she is disheartened but speaks well

Of him, although he is discomfited,  
Disconsolate, dishonored, still

disbranched

Of any fruit, a monarch dispossessed

Of a realm not his own and never held.

Tonight's my wedding night if we anull

Her hopes and base Antonio's.

*Fernando.* Isabella!

*Sebastiano.* I will like some protecting angel guard

Her head, invisible in shrubs and hedge.

Exit Sebastiano and enter Isabella

*Isabella.* So, light the way to his dishonesty.

*Fernando.* He has not come as yet.  
The door is locked.

*Isabella.* I think he will not come.

*Fernando.* That must be seen.

*Isabella.* Who sins in a glass-house?  
You are insane

To swear to it and I for listening.

*Fernando.* My mournful eyes have seen what they have seen  
In that clear cell unclear, and many times.

I have heard Florida this very night  
Moon for her love. No doubt, if we hide here  
In darkest night, we will discover soon

A husband false, a false friend, false vows all.

*Isabella.* You have deluded me. There's nobody.

*Fernando.* Let us walk round this path an hour. *Isabella.* Well, well.

Exeunt Fernando and Isabella, enter Francesca and Gaspero

*Francesca.* She loves me painfully and looks at me

As if she smiled on clouds in hope to see

Them puffed away. *Gaspero.* The moon seems sick tonight.

Diana loathes to watch your brother's deeds.

*Francesca.* He will no doubt arrive soon. Give me now

My cup of posset. I need a hot drink On scalding nights. *Gaspero.* Here.

*Francesca.* Well, and fitly comes

An Isabella. Have we other cups?

*Gaspero.* Yes, there. The night's advanced. Prepare to rest.

Exit Gaspero, re-enter Isabella and Fernando

*Francesca.* Will you join me in a cup?

*Fernando.* Gladly. *Isabella.* Good.

*Fernando.* This makes me very drowsy. *Francesca.* After that,

You'll sleep well, I can promise you, dear sir.

*Isabella.* Ah, did you pour an opiate in it? *Francesca.* No.

Will you behold the house? Here are the keys.

*Isabella.* The visit may bestir us.

*Fernando.* Will you go?

*Francesca.* I must wait for Antonio.

*Fernando.* So must we.

*Isabella.* Come, let us enter.

*Fernando.* Ah, such heaviness!

Exeunt Fernando and Isabella into the glass-house, enter Antonio

*Francesca.* Antonio, hush! O, do not breathe a word

Too loud. I think two lovers are well caught.

*Antonio.* What, here? *Francesca.* In the glass-house, I saw them kiss.

*Antonio.* No! *Francesca.* Yes, I swear I did. *Antonio.* Who is the slave?

*Francesca.* Fernando. *Antonio.* Sebastiano's friend? *Francesca.* He, he.

Believe a sister, or if your eyes bear No blotch sure to make us see what is not,

Then enter here and stand appalled that lust

Sins boldy in the face of the pale moon.

*Antonio.* I cannot enter. *Francesca.* Then do not. She is

Your strumpet- no, your wife. I care no more.

*Antonio.* My caring careful sister!

*Francesca.* Who can see

Such love-tricks without loathing?

*Antonio.* Ha, what did-

I barely can speak- what did you see?

*Francesca.* Who would have thought four arms, four legs, two trunks Could be commingled into such a knot?

They seem like gnarled roots, forked. Two bodies? No,

But one, a single body malefic.

They heave, they hump. O, never may a girl

Behold such waves on waves of thrusts and thrusts.

*Antonio.* In the glass-house?

*Francesca.* In the glass-house.

*Antonio.* When?

*Francesca.* Now.

Their sighs are not of air but fire; their lips

Meet as if grown into one face. They live

In a hot-house, which burns my cheeks with shame.

*Antonio.* (drawing out his sword) Unconsummated love is deadly hate. I knew she would. Oh-ho! Oh-ho! I'll make

Sharp lust a terrible example, so That men henceforth will blanch on hearing but

It named, and women shake their heads and moan.

*Francesca.* What, are you mad? Hold, hold. No, no, stop here.

*Antonio.* Humanity is deaf and blind in me

And laughs away at all catastrophes.

Exit Antonio into the glass-house

*Francesca.* A strange and sudden silence after all!

I hate this quietness and must fear it.

What are these drops of red on panes of glass?

Ho, brother, come out; ho, I beg you, do.

You have spoiled everything, I swear you have.

Re-enter Antonio, covered with blood

*Antonio.* Down to the cell of furies where false vows

Of wedlock weep and die! O, perjurious

Unhappy marriage, innocence made drunk

With whoring! Ha! But say, what is this now?

I should be smiling. Strange! I should be glad

To find a whore fresh-bleeding, yet I'm not.

*Francesca.* What have you, crazed fool, done to them and us?

*Antonio.* Dull ignorance lives long and merry still.

*Francesca.* You'll make me worse than mad, I swear you will.

Exit Francesca into the glass-house

What have you done? Our stars are all eclipsed.

Such broken members cannot be set right.

*Antonio.* You speak the truth and well. I'm happier now.

Re-enter Francesca

*Francesca.* O! Let me weep till  
doomsday's last confusion.

Perhaps it has arrived already.

*Antonio.* O, what a vision was there  
seen! Asleep

Together! Her moist hand dropped  
carelessly

On his breast, yearning for his love  
in sleep,

His where I gape and tremble but to  
name!

Their union consummated to my  
face!

But O! Why do I feel no wish to rush  
Towards you, thankful for a sister's  
care?

O! Why did you reveal to me this  
truth?

*Francesca.* I spoke no truth.

*Antonio.* Ha? Ha? No truth? No  
truth? What do you mean?

*Francesca.* Your bed was never  
wronged by them at all.

*Antonio.* Will madness be my mind's  
companion? Say,

Repeat, and then repeat a second  
time

What I could not have heard. My  
ears hum, buzz-

*Francesca.* The chastest of all beds  
was not defiled.

*Antonio.* Ah, my sword blushes  
tears. This blade can be-

That has been proven- cruel far  
above

A man to woman. My bed never  
wronged?

Do you say so? You? Do you say so  
twice?

*Francesca.* I'll weep with truth for  
the rest of my life.

*Antonio.* No, do not weep but bleed.  
(cutting her

*Francesca.* Ha!

*Antonio.* And here I stand and stare,  
A stain to my creation!

Say that you spoke the truth and  
that you lie

Now, or else I will cut you fiercely  
Into a thousand pieces small,  
because

You worthily deserve a thousand  
deaths.

*Francesca.* Ha! Ha! I'm cut and  
bleeding. Help, help, help!

Re-enter Gaspero with Florida

*Gaspero.* What shrieks are these?  
Antonio, and a man

Complete in blood! *Antonio.* I muse.  
I'm lost in hate-

*Florida.* Against whom? *Antonio.*  
Desperately abused

By her, a falser Eve. Her tongue  
infects

Up to the stars, so that I cannot  
breathe

Such air as hers which now exists on  
earth.

Why did you lie? What could possess  
you to

Blow such dust into wedlock-  
worried eyes?

*Francesca.* O, O, I'll tell you  
everything and more.

*Antonio.* Here's my fleshed sword  
before your ghastly face.

The truth, or else to horror I will  
add

New horrors never seen, to be  
thought of

As fables of old fools. *Gaspero.*  
Antonio, hold.

*Florida.* Let him go, Gaspero. He  
heeds his tongue.

*Francesca.* I meant to heap disgrace  
on Isabella,

And by such means in shadows  
freeze my own.

*Antonio.* What fault could you  
commit worth this and this?

*Francesca.* I bore an issue of Alzido's  
loins,

And cut it off before the fault could  
breathe.

*Antonio.* My wrath's redoubled.  
When I think on this,

My wrath's redoubled still from  
what it was

Seconds ago. Ah, did Alzido pump  
you?

*Gaspero.* Antonio! You sweat, slaver,  
blink, and wave your arms, as if you  
mean to kill us all.

*Francesca.* Because she blamed me  
and with harsh advice

Accused and threatened still, I  
wholly lost

My way and sought to pay back pain  
with pain.

I poured an opiate in their beverage  
And hoped to see them lie in  
seeming lust.

*Antonio.* The more I hear, the worse  
I rave. I stand

In wonder. I killed my wife for no  
reason.

I killed an innocent man for no  
reason.

Who knew death could so jest and  
cog with us?

Look up, my sword, not down. Now,  
towards you,

My Florida, I roll my eyes. You know  
This sword hates lies. Did you at any  
time

Know of this love, know of this  
abortion?

*Florida.* I favored both.

*Antonio.* (stabbing her)  
Thanks for your honesty.

*Florida.* I'll bleed to death. A  
surgeon, ho! O, O!

Exit Florida

*Antonio.* There is no more to say or  
do. To bed,

A heavier one with blood, where  
vengeance dreams.

Exit Antonio

*Francesca.* I may be peppered if I  
wake tomorrow.

But yet- but yet- but yet- where can I  
go?

I know no honest man who takes in  
sluts.

Where can a wingless fly jump to,  
where but

Inside the spider's belly? *Gaspero.*  
Sweating in

The coldest dread of what may still  
ensue,

I'll stay with you tonight and pray  
for life.

Exeunt Francesca and Gaspero

Act 5. Scene 1. An abandoned field

Enter Giulio

*Giulio.* Ah, ah! I fail and fall in the  
end.

Enter Florida

*Florida.* Ah, ah, pains, pains  
unbearable!

*Giulio.* Florida! I beg for further help. You must aid me again, kind Florida; otherwise, Giulio must irrevocably be a man who was.

*Florida.* I'm unable to. I just now arise from the surgeon's hard and bloody table, sir. O, his needles were so cruel to me, Giulio, that I can barely sustain the way towards my house, so full are these eyes because of pains inflicted there. He suspects that I received this wound from a bad cause. Wagging his head in dismay, he frowned, declaring: "You are a bad woman no doubt, Florida. I may not spare you. I think you are bad, very bad, to the extent that you must no doubt find someone to mend your soul as competently and generously as I myself mend your body. It must be done, Florida, it must be done in the end, lest even worse pains ensue." And yet I committed no evil deed, I think. No, I improved the condition of Antonio's sister, who was, as everyone must agree, in a very bad way. I did all that I could for her. Now I must to go to bed and sleep, lest I faint away at once and without remedy in the muck of an obscure street. I'll help you another day, Giulio. Ask for me next week. Does the passionate lover still suffer from pains of love?

*Giulio.* In a fashion, you may say so.

*Florida.* Unlucky Giulio, I can speak no more, but must go home and rest a little, if I can.

Exit Florida and enter Gaspero

*Gaspero.* Ha, Giulio, in rags, as if pursued!

*Giulio.* I am, Gaspero, I am, ah, harassed so hotly.

*Gaspero.* By whom?

*Giulio.* By I do not know how many of the duchess' men and no doubt soon by officers of the law.

*Gaspero.* Why?

*Giulio.* I have killed, Gaspero.

*Gaspero.* Ha, strange. Who?

*Giulio.* The duke.

*Gaspero.* You may not live.

*Giulio.* (weeping

I fear that's too true.

*Gaspero.* Why did you kill the duke?

*Giulio.* O, Gaspero, you would scarcely believe my tale, had I time to explain to you all my miseries and motivations. I was horribly beguiled by the duchess. The day before my deed, I was to some extent squeamish even while cutting slices of beef at a table: look at me now, a man who has proven he can cut a powerful duke's veins, but yet who in no manner hated the man he killed.

*Gaspero.* Did his servants strike you? I notice your limp.

*Giulio.* The result of a night in brambles, nettles, thorns, and I do not know what. I'm pricked for pricking. I cannot run far away, if we must reason, with such needles of justice sticking on my flesh. I'm severely impaired in running with some ability because of them, deficient even while standing, and worse of all in sitting. You may help, kind Gaspero; your friend should be helped in his grief and calamitous mischances, though you know you

aid a murderer, a cruel one, but yet a good man as well, who in no fashion stabbed for his own delight or profit.

*Gaspero.* How?

*Giulio.* Remove some of the nettles. You can. I tried, without being unable to reach most of them. Otherwise, I'm a sorry and dead man, Gaspero, certain to be caught, assured to be restrained against his will and to suffer the woofullest and bitterest penalty. Then you'll say for the rest of your life: "I might have helped my friend, though a horrid murderer, my Giulio, but I did not, choosing instead to close two eyes and two ears. I failed him in his worst hour and was his final bane, when most he needed help, friendly service, and guidance, and therefore he died, most miserably, shredded by the maws of a duchess' dogs of justice, who, were they true and honest magistrates, would turn their face about and run back home, tearing with bloody teeth at the legs and arms of their own mistress instead of mine. But great ones never suffer as fiercely as little ones, Gaspero. You no doubt acknowledge the truth of that assertion; you have read, I'm sure, philosophy and possess rudiments of many other tracts of knowledge that absolve you from any serious accusation of ignorance, being well informed on many matters we should all be aware of and even on some topics few know anything about with tolerable precision.

*Gaspero.* What must be done?

*Giulio.* (pulling down his breeches

Pull deftly away some of these thorns.

*Gaspero.* But I have no experience at all in that way. I boast no doctor's skills, and never have.

*Giulio.* This sort of charity requires little in the way of expert surgery, I believe. Pull, pull, only pull, but quickly and delicately.

*Gaspero.* I will. Be patient.

*Giulio.* Ah, gently, good Gaspero, gently. I expect prompt dexterity. You know I'm hurt; do not maim me worse than I already am. Have you not read Hippocrates? Such pains, if you show the least carelessness in handling, should stay with me for the rest of my life, if a life can yet be sustained for such a wretch as I certainly am at this juncture. Youth I possess: I may yet do something worthwhile, something anyone may recognize as honorable. Give me time.

*Gaspero.* I'll try not to hurt you, but I have never operated, I told you this from the start, in such a manner.

*Giulio.* I believe you.

*Gaspero.* I think there are thousands of them and I find them everywhere.

*Giulio.* I know there are. Take out as many as you can, lest I'm undone today and perhaps forever. I'm of a youthful age, you know I am, too fresh by far to lie in an old hole today- O, much too nubile, young in years, though not in pains and awful premonitions.

*Gaspero.* I think this may relieve you a little.

*Giulio.* O, yes, I'm solaced from the worst of them. I thank you, O, I thank you so much.



*Gaspero.* We live in strange and dangerous hours. You would scarcely believe what occurred at Antonio's house last night.

*Giulio.* A case worse than my own?

*Gaspero.* I believe so, worthy but murderous Giulio, though I perhaps should avoid in all conscience to uncurtain it.

*Giulio.* What is it?

*Gaspero.* Two murders, foul ones, as the best of them are.

*Giulio.* Who was killed?

*Gaspero.* Isabella.

*Giulio.* The duke's daughter? That quiet lady?

*Gaspero.* She.

*Giulio.* Who killed her? How? Why?

*Gaspero.* Antonio. He's supposed by many to be my friend, yet how can I be denied from speaking ill of him after such a deed? For all must come out in the end, I'm sure. He stabbed her as she slept, violently jealous of a man who barely knew her, never thought of her, except perhaps in an act of friendship towards that repulsed and obnoxious suitor, Sebastiano. How cruelly and in what a shameful manner was Fernando served for this act of friendship, all in the service of a friend's nonsensical and persistent suit, when such endeavors of futility should long ago have been abandoned and forgotten.

*Giulio.* Why do we murder, so often if not always to the detriment of our fame and for all time? Hah, you hurt me, kind but too hasty Gaspero, in the worst way possible for a man to bear, and with great difficulty to be uttered and believed.

*Gaspero.* I see nettles everywhere on you, even below the parts you show me.

*Giulio.* I know you do. I can feel them.

*Gaspero.* What must be done?

*Giulio.* I do not know. I trudge on unknown paths where I cannot help myself.

*Gaspero.* I'll help you awhile, as best I can, then you must hasten and hide your culpable head in unknown shadows far away. I may not hide you in Antonio's house, for that's the least safe place now. My own house is too popular and open for murder to hide in, especially concerning the quelling of a man of such importance and too well known. If it please you to consider the most plausible consequence of your abominable act, you will be seen there, you will be noticed, you will be talked of, and, once talked of, you must be recognized; officers must come for you and seize you; you'll be lead away, arraigned, accused, almost certainly lose your hopeless case, since you are guilty and confess it, and therefore in the end there's little doubt but you must loathsomely suffer for your crime. If you name the duchess as an accomplice, you may be believed; she may be hanged as well as you, even tortured, for I have witnessed with trepidation some notable ladies' heads with numberless dunkings gasp in buckets till they be nearly choked, though never drowned, or else sighing a life away on beds of rope and sharpest steel, whenever judges have the least

suspicion and any reason to believe the existence of additional accessories, abetting and supporting this of all crimes the most heinous and unloved. That's your utmost hope of future happiness.

*Giulio.* Quite unlikely to be a sufficient cause for happiness. I expect more than that. I wish for more than that.

*Gaspero.* I know you do. But you'll be led to your final destination, as all of us must be, though in various ways, and for some in a happier manner, atop a cart, and what should be the strangest sight of all quite unable to sit in it.

*Giulio.* You offer little in the way of hope.

*Gaspero.* You planted a wicked tree: do you expect to taste savory fruit? That's a dream of the world, and not the world itself. How can you meditate on thoughts of hope, bewildered and guilty? How can you escape, all the less likely after being stung and wounded in such a way and at the worst time? Moreover, you acknowledge that you committed this crime, other men know that you committed this crime, and with precipitated vehemence and strength of purpose must for their own safety run after you, capture you, and, if a court of law and justice allow it, lead you with somber mien to the fatal and bloody gallow-tree, bestrewn with abandoned flesh perpetually stinking, and there with commendable serenity look up and see you hang awhile till you in mercy choke away, or else to lie

face down against the border of a flat wooden block, and after vain prayers to hear the whoosh of a neck bloodily severed, perhaps more than once because of the too dull sword or axe. With your unseeing eyes to behold in swift projection the dark bottom of a filthy basket, to feel the hard contact and to hear the dull thud of your nose and face on what other criminal faces have fallen on, not cleaned off as yet, the complete head of what was once a man chopped off in disgrace and the rest of his body spurned away and buried, as it deserves, in an unmarked grave! That's the most fortunate outcome to be hoped for, I believe.

*Giulio.* I fear it is. A dead body is pushed out of the cart and the horse is pissing. I was a happy man before lying in pleasure with my Amoretta and never suspected it.

*Gaspero.* A thousand men and women in our city on this bright and cheerful morning vouch for the same sentiments, speak similar words, weep and choke on them throughout a long and painful breakfast, when varieties of bread taste like stones and jellied fruits like blood. No help exists after such considerations, beyond the view of auspicious thoughts and faculties. Your unenviable fate I would not allow to my most dangerous enemy. But yet I must with sad regret leave you, luckless and maligned Giulio. I may remain here no longer, for I very much dread even while the sun shines even worse extravagances

and contumelies from Antonio, that ruthless and unconfessed self-appointed robber of his own honor. I say no more, as once I did, "my Antonio", to his shame, for he's mine no more, but must become death's Antonio, and for that every citizen should kneel and pray.

*Giulio.* I thank you for this sort of help at least.

Exeunt Giulio and Gaspero

Act 5. Scene 2. Antonio's house

Enter Sebastiano and Alzido

*Alzido.* No, I arrived just at the stroke of nine.

*Sebastiano.* Could I but see him first!

*Alzido.* He asked me here,  
But I would rather reel in alehouse dance,

Or on street-corners bother citizens  
With drunken songs and jests: my usual course

Before the Sunday sermon.  
*Sebastiano.* O, I fear.

*Alzido.* I see you do. But why?

*Sebastiano.* I hoped to see  
This nobleman last night, but as I walked

Inside his garden, I was summoned to

The ducal palace. Now I know no one I know.

I left a friend at the glass-house, who stayed for me,

And tremble at the markings on the panes.

What do they mean? Where is he? I am numb

In fits of trembling and with fears perfumed.

*Alzido.* I'm very cool and neat, and would prefer

To sit much farther from you.- Is it he?

Enter Gaspero

*Gaspero.* You wish to see Antonio?

*Sebastiano.* Yes, I must.

*Gaspero.* He'll see Alzido first.

*Sebastiano.* Then I'll return.

This very morning I should see your friend.

Exit Sebastiano

*Alzido.* What is Antonio's wish with me?

*Gaspero.* I cannot tell, but must fear the worst. Antonio is blindly furious at you, I can see so far. He has discovered some of your recreations, Alzido. He has little reason to commend you for such honors bestowed on him and on his sister. To be more precise, he has discovered how deeply you creep between the thighs of his sister's good graces.

*Alzido.* And what graces these are, Gaspero! They make many a limp part swell upright. What, angry at me for no more serious reason than this?

*Gaspero.* He has also discovered how secretly you rid yourself of the unborn inconvenient proof of your potencies, and perhaps eventual eligibility for marriage.

*Alzido.* How?

*Gaspero.* On my valor, Francesca was compelled to tell him. I could not prevent her; he would have marred us all otherwise.

*Alzido.* All's well, then. What pea-size pia matter would find a cause to worry, now that everything's open?

*Gaspero.* I do not convey this message to terrify you, but you must at once hear me with diligent attention. When I awoke this morning, I contemplated to warn you off from this visit, but he immediately guessed my kindest intentions, declaring with impatience: "Do not keep Alzido away, for otherwise I'll run to his house, and, if I do, this day may be a terrible one to him."

*Alzido.* I do not frighten easily.

*Gaspero.* At least you have received some pleasure from our story, which has not so far been at any time my case.

*Alzido.* Her voice among ten thousand! Her pair of breasts among ten thousand more! A man's chest, belly, and thighs on a woman's chest, belly, and thighs: there are few sensations sweeter than those, Gaspero, or more ardent and loving—you know as much as that; I need not ridiculously press and exaggerate my arguments for the sake of that fine brain of yours— and all the more so when two bodies suavely rub against each other to their mutual felicity. With more than usual joy and devotion, my body cast a shadow on this maiden's body; believe it, for I'll always remember, and almost in tears think of it even now. Under such

conditions, the man is somewhat pressing and the woman somewhat yielding. But I have also known the reverse, and recently, too, with her and with others of her sex, and found it equally pleasing. I kiss Francesca's happy face, and she kisses mine: which moral idiot opines that this is bad?

*Gaspero.* Not I.

*Alzido.* On one side, a man cries out with pleasure, and, on the other, a woman cries out with pleasure: how can that be wrong? Is there a holier religion than that? Is it not the only one? Show me a sight more beautiful or carefree. And yet what a thing we make of it! A bawd abases it, a priest defiles it. They are the disgraces of society, not we; all these in attempts at domination over the mind, more lasting than land and goods.

*Gaspero.* And now a brother is very near to spoiling such lofty and liberal thoughts of love, only because of that pierced and almost empty bladder: honor, together with fear and anger at his sister's tainted reputation and because of the off-hand manner you disposed of her progeny.

*Alzido.* Ah, well, here our negligence is somewhat to blame, even from our mildest Cato. But must straw-headed youths be harshly reprimanded for stuffing their ears and taking fire? Must conservative purpose and age flourish to our detriment? Must not youth benefit from experience, if youth be youth and not crippled? How can we learn if we be slaughtered for the least mishap?

*Gaspero.* He comes.

Exit Gaspero and enter Antonio

*Antonio.* Alzido, you are welcome.

*Alzido.* I thank you.

*Antonio.* You have had fine sport with my sister, sir.

*Alzido.* Her full advantages keep a man square

And fit for exercise; her rounded bowls

On chest and backside I press to test strength

Of palm and wrist. I also am improved,

Thanks to her suppleness, at hip and back.

She puts me to a healthy working sweat,

While I urge her to Amazonean toils,  
And gladly offer to her well-parched lips

A cordial drink for her recovery,  
Brewed fresh from my own cellars,  
rarely

Disdained by her. I love her rather well,

And any man would like her better than

A parson's reprobation and demur  
Against our mode of conduct.

*Antonio.* O, no doubt.

What type of sword do you wear on your hip?

*Alzido.* I am uncertain of its origin,  
But I know the blade's good. Yet I prefer

The scabbard. When I see a scabbard, I

Know what to put in it. I wet the blade,

Then I thrust it in. She does not wear out

With placing in, I'm happy to report.

*Antonio.* Will you draw it out?

*Alzido.* Now? *Antonio.* Now, draw it out.

*Alzido.* Why should I?

*Antonio.* (taking out his sword

Because my own is out. *Alzido.* A lusty blade,

Who means to swagger and count men's demise

As exploits of true worth. I hate such wasps;

I loathe such winds of honor.

*Antonio.* Very strange.

So daring with my sister and the blade

Not drawable to her own brother, hah?

*Alzido.* I find no cause to fight with you. *Antonio.* No cause?

My sister is your whore. *Alzido.* Ah, ah! Complaints

Are wearisome. Though I admit she's young,

A man can but enjoy what she lets out,

The better to be served and be let in.

*Antonio.* I do not fancy much the carefree man.

I wish you never had been born: you seem

To be a slight one, loose, unfit for things

Of worth, an elephant in mischief, but

A bloodless gnat in courage and respect.

Your secret manner wounds me, and I find

No ready panacea and no balm,

No oil from bright Apollo apt to  
salve.

But let Francesca now express her  
view. -

Come, seed of shame and murder-  
*Alzido*. Murder, hah?

*Antonio*. Come, purulent one,  
honied fly-trap, cheat

Of your own hopes, come, slippery  
shell-fish

Outside your element, come,  
cowardice,

Come, fruitful wickedness.

Enter Francesca

*Francesca*. I am cast down,  
But mind the sad role you must play  
today:

A brother's, not a fearful  
executionner's.

*Antonio*. But I no longer know who I  
am, girl.

Your lies turn me into someone  
unknown,

Someone whose open mouth  
proclaims a man's,

Yet speaking nothing I can  
understand.

*Francesca*. Then find yourself before  
we lose ourselves.

*Antonio*. I'll study that much later.  
To you, sir,

I ask this question: what do you  
intend

To do with this piece? *Alzido*.  
Nothing. *Antonio*. Nothing, sir?

May I not interest you, for the sake  
Of faith and morals, in a marriage  
with

This baggage? She is light, I know,  
but you

May travel all the easier. In this way,

I'll see no more of either. *Alzido*. I  
refuse.

*Antonio*. Is that your final answer?

*Francesca*. It is mine

As well. Consider, brother, if you  
can,

My age, his lack of means for  
marriage- *Antonio*. Good.

Let us then have no marriage. That  
state has

To me been too unlucky and I weep  
Hard at the memory. *Alzido*. What is  
this gear?

*Francesca*. I cannot tell you without  
making him

Completely mad. *Antonio*. I am well  
again-

Not well- however not much worse,  
as well

As possible on cheerless mourning  
hours.

Let us drink in conclusion. That we  
must.

*Alzido*. To what? *Antonio*. That  
cannot be known. *Alzido*.  
Reasonable.

Sir, to your better health. *Antonio*.  
And so to yours.

Will you join us, Francesca? Come,  
you must.

*Francesca*. I will, to please you and  
to mollify.

*Antonio*. (spitting out the wine  
Sink, subtle poison; let our shames  
decline.

*Alzido*. Why does he speak of  
poison? *Francesca*. O, sick, sick.

*Antonio*. It quickly spreads. I like  
that. *Alzido*. Poison? O,

Burns, awful cramps! I must find- I  
reel- must find-

*Antonio*. Go, careless fornication,  
crawl away;

Perdition of a life of value, out!  
 Indulgent curtains on your lechery  
 Are shredded, and we find a corpse  
 behind.

Exit Alzido, crawling

Go, traitor! In our field, my soldier  
 stays,  
 And laughs at danger, with a whore's  
 reward.

*Francesca.* I die, an emblem of  
 imagined virtues. So,  
 Die if I must. A girl with such men in  
 The world has no chance. Cruelly I  
 must

Depart. I should say something of  
 the sun,

Or of the moon perhaps, I know no  
 more.

Then I should also speak, I think-  
 Oh, Oh!

This wine has spoiled my day  
 completely-

I also should speak of the after-life.

But on that trivial subject, it is best  
 To smile a little and offend no one.

Oh, oh! (she dies)

*Antonio.* That's well said. I like the  
 ohs best of all.

Re-enter Gaspero

*Gaspero.* What is this now?

*Antonio.* Do not ask what I do: I  
 never know.

*Gaspero.* Wide-ranging rages like  
 dark tempests blast

Without a cause. - Dead?

*Antonio.* Ask me another question I  
 may know.

*Gaspero.* Insufferable lord! *Antonio.*  
 That's well said, good sir,

And most can but agree with your  
 opinion.

Re-enter Sebastiano

*Sebastiano.* Antonio, I must speak  
 with you at once.

*Antonio.* O, very readily. You may sit  
 here.

*Sebastiano.* I think your sister  
 should return to bed.

*Antonio.* Well thought on! *Gaspero,*  
 remove her. *Gaspero.* Death!

Exit Gaspero, bearing out Francesca

*Antonio.* Your business?

*Sebastiano.* Where is my Isabella?

*Antonio.* I do not know, sir, where  
 your Isabel

May be, but I know where mine was  
 and is,

And always will remain where now  
 she is.

I weep and choke at her fond  
 memory,

And gasp in horror on my deepest  
 shames.

*Sebastiano.* I need translators for  
 these words of woe.

*Antonio.* The man entire must be  
 translated. O!

I hurt the innocent. Why do I live?

*Sebastiano.* Still wide! Are you  
 drunk? *Antonio.* Some have drunk  
 today

Who should not have and that's my  
 fault as well.

*Sebastiano.* Do you put on a garb of  
 madness? That

May not stand as your noble  
 privilege.

*Antonio.* I ask for none. Come closer to my lips;  
 This must be whispered. I ask nothing, sir,  
 Except for one thing. *Sebastiano.* There's a kind of death  
 On your stale breath which I detest.  
*Antonio.* That's it.  
 You have found me out, sir.  
*Sebastiano.* Wide, wide, wide still!  
*Antonio.* Will you see Isabella? Here she is.

(Isabella's bloody corpse is revealed in a glass-coffin)

How do you like my work?  
*Sebastiano.* O, no! O, no!  
 My wife! My own love! O, my lonesome one!  
*Antonio.* This vexes me. This vexes me past thought.  
 To roar in passion and to weep and stare  
 For this unwary woman not his wife?  
 It grieves a modest eye- I say it though  
 This must annoy you- and it grates my heart  
 That you bewail the death of one who was  
 Another man's. *Sebastiano.* My wife! And now death's own!  
 Did you kill her? *Antonio.* I did, disloyally.  
*Sebastiano.* What of Fernando?  
*Antonio.* In his fresh-dug grave.  
*Sebastiano.* You are for my sword, or I am for yours.  
*Antonio.* You cannot touch my flesh with sharper steel  
 Than what will prick my conscience for all times.

There is no opiate for this type of pain.

*Sebastiano.* But first I must to a sad duchess go,  
 Last night's neglected promise. One word more,  
 Fool of deep sorrow, do not kill yourself.  
 O, do not kill yourself, I pray. My blade  
 Is starved and longs to make injustice bleed.

Exit Sebastiano

*Antonio.* Ah, take from me what I will crave to lose.

Exit Antonio drawing the curtain in Isabella's chamber

### Act 5. Scene 3. Florida's house

Enter Florida and Firestone

*Firestone.* Why do you bleed, mother?

*Florida.* Because of wayward love, little Firestone. Is that no honest reason?

*Firestone.* I think it is. Will you die from the wound, mother?

*Florida.* I think I will. It is infected, the physician says, in the worst manner he has ever seen. I have a fever that like a good friend will not leave my side and an inflammation that would bode very ill for young and perfect flesh. Will you grieve if I die?

*Firestone.* A little. But, except for food and clothing, I may not need you anymore.



*Florida.* That answer tortures me worse than surgeons' needles.

*Firestone.* I have ravished with some heat the red-haired girl next door. So rest assured love at least is taken care of.

*Florida.* Ah, well, that may come as it may.

*Firestone.* Will there be a mass of the dead sung for you?

*Florida.* I doubt that.

*Firestone.* I needlessly wrote a text for it, then.

*Florida.* Use it when Tabby the cat dies.

*Firestone.* True, I should have thought of that.

*Florida.* I die without sleeping. O, my side pains me too sorely for life's only medicine.

*Firestone.* Will I be the main beneficiary of your will?

*Florida.* Yes, son.

*Firestone.* Our property is not worth much, the notary said.

*Florida.* I'm sorry about that.

*Firestone.* What is life after death, mother?

*Florida.* I'll answer that question with another one. What were you ten months before your birth?

*Firestone.* Nothing.

*Florida.* You have your answer.

*Firestone.* The parson says otherwise, but my languid head only half attends or falls asleep before he reaches his conclusion.

*Florida.* He says that after we die we continue to live.

*Firestone.* Ha! Ha! Ha! Ha! Ha! Ha! Ha! Ha!

*Florida.* You would be even merrier if you knew the entire story.

*Firestone.* Ha! Ha! Ha! Ha! Ha! Ha!

*Florida.* The wise may speak, but a child's laughter is wiser.

*Firestone.* Why do our gloomy figures of authority believe such senseless nonsense?

*Florida.* Because they earn a living from it.

*Firestone.* The parson will be very angry if I tell him what you say.

*Florida.* True, such people prefer to bully than to pray. If with friends you speak in this way, one of them may strike you on the mouth- they like symbols and symmetry- not because you are damned, for they care little about that, but because the rest sit smiling by in silence. Now, to bed at last.

*Firestone.* Good night, mother.

*Florida.* Good night, son.

Exeunt Florida and Firestone

#### Act 5. Scene 4. The ducal palace

(Cries outside; enter Placida with a skull and a lighted candle and Amoretta with an extinguished brand and breeches

*Placida.* Extinguish every light but one. Now peace

After such broils! Black Giulio has been found

And on his tree of shame rots in the night-air.

I knew my followers as men who serve;

Now I know them as men of trustworthiness

And certainty, and strong against my foes.

*Amoretta.* Did you not see how with  
suspended arms  
The traitor sweated fear, his eyes  
enlarged  
And straining hard to pop out of his  
head?  
Did you not see my brand, as hot as  
his,  
Find the straight way to man's part  
that sins most,  
Just in the middle of inverted "Y"?  
Did you not hear the villain roar and  
rage  
That ever he considered woman's  
love?  
It is no idle thrill to strike warm  
blood  
Aflame to death with what is hotter  
still.  
Was it not I who singed him? No?  
Not I?  
*Placida.* You did, and present  
minutes fill our joy.  
But let us triumph in another way.  
I have, you see, my true love's face  
restored.  
*Amoretta.* But why do you take out  
your dear love's head  
Into the still unquiet night? *Placida.*  
Because  
I know my dead one lives. Place in  
the head  
My candle. *Amoretta.* So I do.  
*Placida.* Light it. *Amoretta.* He  
breathes.  
*Placida.* O, give me things with life in  
them! Tonight,  
My Sebastiano can but please me  
well.  
He smiles and beckons. With the  
duke away,  
A path is found for love to prosper  
well.

*Amoretta.* I hear some noise outside.  
*Placida.* No doubt my love.

Enter Sebastiano

*Sebastiano.* I come too late. *Placida.*  
I need no candle light,  
For my way's found again. Retire, my  
girl.

Exit Amoretta

*Sebastiano.* You know my faith, but  
to my shame and grief  
I was prevented by Antonio's rage.  
You have heard of five murders at  
his house:  
He must not boast of those.  
Tomorrow I  
Must be the punisher of loathed  
crimes.  
A justicer should like a surgeon be,  
Search out the wounds that fester;  
though in dread  
And agony the patient jump and cry,  
Apply the sharpest needles, mop out  
pus,  
And nothing feel. *Placida.* O, my tall  
yew! I am  
Meant for your deepest shadows.  
Cover me.  
*Sebastiano.* We'll whisper on the way  
how best a man  
Of honor may serve well a duchess'  
love.

Exeunt Placida and Sebastiano

Act 5. Scene 5. Antonio's house

Enter Antonio and Gaspero

*Antonio.* Dead image of myself  
before I die,

I wait for trespass creeping far too  
slow.

*Gaspero.* What man of honor would  
not shout with joy

To watch you die? To virtue must a  
friend

Stand fixed, and never to man's fault  
or crime.

*Antonio.* Well said, my Gaspero.  
Where is the man

Who must remove a most unhappy  
wretch

From present nothingness to the  
next one?

*Gaspero.* I think our Sebastiano will  
best know.

Exit Gaspero and enter Sebastiano

*Antonio.* Despair with crutches  
hurries and must fall.

I am for you, sir. You see how I wait  
On your sweet pleasure still.

*Sebastiano.* Who would desire  
Your company except a murderer?

Those who love monsters cannot  
live with men.

*Antonio.* I always bore a limp sword  
for the tasks

Of honesty, a beastly cruel one  
In ways of vengeance. What more  
can be said?

I flew on a winged horse to  
jealousies,

And towards patience in my agony  
Crawled like a sickly turtle half-way  
crushed.

A student in his loves, a scholar in  
His hates! Do not waste pity on my  
griefs.

*Sebastiano.* O, never, sir. No, never  
fear for that.

Perpetual tears have muddied my  
pale face:

I'll wash it carefully with your red  
blood,

Or see the earth write "loser" with  
my own.

*Antonio.* In highest courage let man  
rise or fall.

But one of us will halt off from this  
room,

See more of sun, play chess,  
consume a fig,

Sit in a privy, hum a tune, hear  
wrens,

Walk with his dog, doze quietly at  
noon,

Scratch his leg on awakening: all  
these

The other must abandon, done  
away,

His face a darkness, from prosperity  
Bereft of all, and dine in halls of  
death

At table with blood-haired  
Proserpine.

(They draw swords and fight;  
Sebastiano thrusts Antonio through

*Sebastiano.* Are you not paid?

*Antonio.* I think so, lord, and well.

*Sebastiano.* Do not speak more. You  
cannot breathe a word

That any worthy person cares to  
hear.

Die, die.

*Antonio.* I like your counsel well.  
Antonio rots.

(he dies

Enter Amoretta

*Amoretta.* Ah, Sebastiano, the most horrid news!

*Sebastiano.* More sorrows?

*Amoretta.* Hear with pity and with fear

That my beloved duchess killed herself.

*Sebastiano.* O, my prophetic spirit! Learn from me

Why she is dead. Last night, on her stained bed,

I comforted this duchess. As she slept,

I heard her whisper how she killed the duke,

Suborning hapless Giulio to her will.

I thought at first I dreamt, but now I know

She flew to kiss the mouth of death, not mine.

*Amoretta.* I am alone. *Sebastiano.*

No, do not beat your face

In grief. In silence let us find some way

To help out lives that seem so bleak today.

Enter servants

Ho, never stare at me and reach for arms.

Re-enter Gaspero

*Gaspero.* Bear out your master, praise his murderer.

Exeunt Sebastiano, Amoretta, Gaspero, and servants bearing out Antonio's corpse